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**\* “A Good and Faithful Servant.”**

**(1521)**

In a cell of the Augustinian monastery at Zütphen there sat, about the year 1521, a monk named Henry Moeller. It was night, and every one lay soundly sleeping; he, the only one awake, was reading eagerly by the dim light of a candle. Before him lay loose sheets of a coarse kind of paper, the contents of which must have been something worth while, since for their sake he was sacrificing his night's rest. Presently he rose and paced back and forth in great excitement. His eyes, beaming with ecstasy, were directed upwards, and because no human being was near with whom he could speak or who, indeed, could have understood him, he talked with his God, and that with such fervency of praise and thanksgiving, it seemed to him as if He were at his very side.

Henry Moeller had always been a devout monk, but of late there had come to him the realization that such as he could not straightway inherit the kingdom of heaven merely because they were of the monastical order. The fame of Dr. Martin Luther had penetrated to him, he had read those writings of his which with the speed of the wind had spread through all lands; and now he was

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\* After a short sketch by Klaus Harms-Kiel, 1852.



## *For the Sake of the Faith.*

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possessed by a mighty longing to see and hear for himself this great man of God, in order that he might get a clearer understanding of all that which had stirred his heart. That the prior would allow him to go, if he requested it, he knew. When the morning dawned, he was firmly resolved to ask such permission, and at the first opportunity he went to him, telling him freely and openly what was in his heart, and how he wished at Wittenberg from Doctor Martin to learn what was the true faith and the genuine way of preaching.

The prior considered awhile and then answered: "It may be well, my son; I know of nothing better than to send you thither. Up to this time you have been a faithful and obedient monk, and you will continue to be so. Go and see what is taking place in Germany and then bring us tidings. I send you as once Herod sent the wise men, but I beg of you, yea, command you, to come again and report to me what you have seen and heard."

Henry Moeller arose and set out, going to Wittenberg. There, to be sure, he saw things other than he ever could have dreamed of in his monastery. Like a breath of fresh air seemed the teaching that met him there, and he became really joyous at the grace and blessing that streamed upon him.

Dr. Martin soon grew fond of him, but while Henry would have liked to enjoy the benefit of his company



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for a longer time, he felt that he must return home to share with his countrymen the treasure he had found.

It was not long until he was preaching freely and fearlessly in Antwerp. Many listened to him, and with enthusiasm. Yes, now they perceived how formerly they had been fed with husks; now they tasted of bread and drank from the living spring; now they cast the yoke from their necks and looked up freely to their Father in heaven; the fires of purgatory no longer held any terrors for them. But the more eagerly the people clung to and flocked to hear the inspired preacher, whom from his birthplace they now called Henry von Zütphen, the more did the followers of the old faith look askance at him. It was only a little while until he became too powerful to suit them, and they secretly consulted together how they might silence him, all agreeing however that it was not possible to do so by fair means, and that they would have to use force.

They bided their time, and then succeeded in putting this faithful witness into prison. There was great lamenting among those whose hearts had been turned to the new doctrine, for they were left alone, without a leader or guide. Their enemies were powerful and they themselves but a handful in comparison to them, yet they did not lose courage. Secretly they came together, consulted and made plans, and finally on a dark, stormy night were successful in rescuing their



beloved Sir Henry from prison. He himself would have been willing indeed to suffer still further for the Lord's sake, but he knew that since He had let him be set free, it was because He had something more for him to do in the world, and he was glad to be of further service to his brethren.

First he went to Wittenberg and from there to Bremen, where he was received with joy, and where in the Church of St. Ansgar he preached with great success and blessing. How different he found it here from his own country! Freely and publicly he announced the new doctrine, and all the people rallied about him and praised God that He had placed again upon a candlestick the Light which had been hid under a bushel.

Henry von Zütphen's fame went out into all lands, and his sermons became more and more earnest and powerful. Many came from abroad to hear him and to seek his help and advice in spiritual things; he was a mighty instrument in the hand of God for the turning of many hearts unto Himself.

Among other places whither his fame reached was Süderdithmarschen. It was in the year 1524 that the widow Wiebge Junge sat spinning in her comfortable room at Meldorf. She was busily turning her spindle, watching in deep meditation the thread as it slipped through her fingers.



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Outside the autumn wind was blowing, driving the dry leaves before it. It was growing dark. The woman hastily arose, saying half aloud: "It has to be — may God bless the undertaking." She got her kerchief from her chest and put it on; then closing up her little house, she took the road to the parsonage.

A light was already shining in the chamber of the pastor, Nicholas Boje, who was not willing to waste a moment when it was possible for him to work, and who even now sat over his books. But he was not studying the large folio volumes. On one of them lay a sheet of paper, and from it he read half audibly:

Christ lay in death's dark prison  
For us a sacrifice,  
He soon again was risen  
That we like him should rise.  
Then let us joyous be,  
Praise God and thankfully  
Sing hallelujah!  
Hallelujah, Lord!

He had not heard a soft tapping at his door, but now that the knocking grew louder he went to open it.

"Why, good evening, Wiebge Junge," said he kindly, "it must be something important that brings you here in such weather and at such an hour."



"It is indeed, reverend sir," she rejoined. "I have had it on my mind a long time. I thought you might misunderstand, but — God give me the right words — well, — I think we ought to have one here who would tell us concerning the new doctrine."

The words were spoken, and with a deep breath Wiebge Junge sat down upon the wooden chair which the pastor had placed for her.

The latter crossed his arms over his breast and with bowed head walked back and forth while she continued: "Sir, I am blest with temporal goods; the descendants of the Nannes are not paupers. I will gladly make sacrifices that some one may come who has been taught by Dr. Martin."

Nicholas Boje nodded, then stopping before the speaker, he looked at her frankly with his clear eyes and said: "My dear madam, I do not blame you for this; moreover, my own heart is also full of longing to become acquainted with the new doctrine. I have long been interested in it, that you know. But I cannot be your teacher since I myself am as yet only a learner."

"It is exactly for this that I have come to you, sir. For about two years there has been at Bremen a former Augustinian monk, Henry von Zütphen, who is an instrument chosen of God for spreading abroad the pure truth. We should bid him come, for not alone you and



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I desire it, but there are many others here in Meldorf who are longing to be instructed."

"I know it, Wiebge Junge, but there are too many enemies of the faith here in the city."\*

"Of course, sir, Satan will not set fettered souls free so easily, but I think hesitation will gain us nothing. We must take the risk. Do you not think that the Almighty looks down upon our honest desire and will assist us?"

"We will ask Him to do so."

"Yes, ask, and act also, sir. It seems to me I would have courage to go to Bremen myself to fetch that man of God."

"That is not necessary," said Nicholas Boje, smiling, "I shall write a letter which we will send to Bremen, and then let Sir Henry decide whether he will come or not."

"He will come, I know."

"God grant it!"

"Sir, write that he must lose no time in making known to us the word of God and in tearing us from the jaws of the Anti-christ, since the latter rules here with so powerful a hand."

"I shall do so, Wiebge Junge, and may the Lord bless my weak words."

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\* Meldorf was a city at that time.



"Farewell, sir; do you know, my heart is light and joyous, since we soon shall have our desire." She drew her kerchief about her shoulders and went out into the stormy autumn night, not heeding the weather.

When she reached her cottage she saw someone standing in the door, waiting; drawing nearer, she recognized her namesake, Greta Jensen, who lived in the home of the wealthy Hans Hemmling, helping his wife in the work of the household.

Greta was an orphan, and in truth had found a second home in this house. Nevertheless she had a divided heart, for Hans Hemmling, his wife and their only son were stubborn adherents of the old faith. They were related to the prior, Torneborch, of the Augustinian monastery at Meldorf, and he watched jealously that nothing of the new doctrine should gain an entrance among his faithful ones. From her childhood Greta had been particularly devoted to her godmother, who on her part had taken the orphaned child of the friend of her youth to her inmost heart. Formerly Greta had visited her much more frequently; but since Wiebge Junge had boldly and publicly made known with what eagerness she was seeking the new faith and how devoted she was to it, the Hemmlings had taken care that this pernicious intercourse should not be allowed. Greta was much grieved at this, for her heart was drawn to her loving godmother, and moreover the precious seed of



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the word of God had fallen into her own heart and had sprung up fresh and strong.

When Wiebge Junge had reached the waiting girl, she exclaimed with astonishment, "Greta, are you here? But, my child, you are not allowed to come to my house, they think it will do injury to your soul if you ——"

"I had to come," interrupted the maiden; "no one knows where I am, they were invited out this evening, and so will not notice that I am away. The old servant, Mary, will not tell on me; she is as silent as the grave."

Meanwhile Wiebge Junge had unlocked the front door and the two entered. Soon they were sitting by the brightly blazing chimney-fire, and the godmother said encouragingly: "Well, Greta, what is the matter?"

Then the maiden raised her beautiful sad eyes to her friend, and with hot flushes answered: "Godmother, 'tis Andrew!"

"Well?" she asked, when the former was silent, "have you quarreled?"

"Quarreled? O no, he asked me to be his wife."

"And you do not wish to be? Then you must say no."

Greta rose, threw her arms about the speaker's neck and whispered: "O, I love him so, I love him so, but——"

"But what?"

"Godmother," said the girl, straightening herself up, "he scorns the new doctrine, calls those who embrace it,



cowardly rebels, who are lost both in time and in eternity; and makes it a condition that I must renounce everything that pertains to it. This I cannot, and will not do."

Wiebge Junge looked at the girl before her in amazement. Her face, illumined by the red glow of the fire, looked transfigured and her blue eyes beamed with inspiration.

"Well, what answer did you give Andrew?" questioned her godmother.

All the animation left her face, a deep pallor spread over it and Greta whispered with a choking voice: "I would think it over."

"And you have thought it over?"

"I wanted to have your advice dear godmother."

Both looked silently into the fire, till at last Wiebge Junge said: "There is a new time coming and we shall have manna in abundance. Pastor Nicholas is going to send a letter to Henry von Zütphen tomorrow. The latter is to come and preach the gospel to us plainly and sincerely. O, child, how I rejoice at the prospect! You must make your decision alone. No one can advise or assist you in it, for you must of your own choice place yourself on the one side or the other. With the Blessed One there is peace and joy in plenty, but there are also persecution and hatred to be expected from those who do not know Him. With your beloved, there is outward well-being and earthly joy, but there will always be a



deep gulf between you, whether or not it is perceptible to the eyes of men. And then — it seems to me you have a longing for the real truth and know too much of its glory to cast it from you like a thing which has become inconvenient and tiresome."

"You are right, godmother. I could not live so, against my convictions, and yet, — O, to forego everything that was my heart's joy and desire — it is almost more than I can bear."

Greta knelt down beside Wiebge Junge, hid her face in her lap and wept bitterly. The latter did not try to stop her, but with her hand gently stroked the girl's head. At last she said softly: "There is one way to put an end to all indecision," — and when the kneeling girl raised her face looking at her intently, she continued: "Commit thy way unto the Lord, — cast your care upon Him! He, the Lord of our life, will do all things well. I shall pray with you that He may give you peace and joy, and that you may find the right way and walk in it."

"I thank you, godmother; I have found that way indeed. I know there is where light and truth are to be found, and I shall be able to walk in it if you help me with your prayers."

"God bless you, my darling child, and if you do not know where to turn, there will always be a place for you under my roof."



"No, godmother, they will not turn me away. It was for this reason Andrew first asked my consent, in order that, if I were to refuse, his parents' disfavor might not rest upon me. But for me it will be doubly hard, to live near him and yet be obliged to lock and bury in my heart all my great love for him."

"The Lord is all powerful, He can do more than change the minds of the Hemmlings and turn their hearts, but of course, you, my child, must have faith, even the kind that moves mountains."

"I do believe, dear godmother."

"Then the blessed Lord will not hide His face from you nor shut His ears to your prayers; go in peace."

Greta rose and her motherly friend accompanied her to the door, saying: "Your heart will soon receive strength enough, for Henry von Zütphen will not let our appeal to him to be in vain, and you will find when you hear his words, that your sacrifice will seem trivial beside the great gift of the pure gospel."

With a comforted heart the maiden went slowly home. As she entered the sitting room, however, she started a little, for there before the bright chimney fire stood Andrew.

"You have been at Wiebge Junge's," he exclaimed, looking searchingly into her face.

"Yes, I was at her home and — Andrew — and —"



"And she said to you: 'Let the poor lost sinner go,' didn't she?"

"No, Andrew, she refused to interfere or in any way advise me, — and she is right. I must decide for myself what my course will be, and — dear Andrew, — I know now."

She had seated herself on a stool opposite him; her face was very pale and her hands, tightly clasped, lay in her lap.

"Greta," he implored, "don't make yourself and me unhappy."

She did not answer, but only looked at him fixedly with her large eyes.

"Speak, Greta," urged Andrew, trying to take her hand. But she pulled it away gently and replied, earnestly: "I cannot do otherwise, I must be true to the Blessed One as I have lately come to know Him."

"And as for me?" cried Andrew, aroused.

"I shall pray to God that He may turn your heart also to the light."

"Never," ejaculated the young man bitterly; "I shall remain faithful to the old religion, let come what will."

A melancholy smile passed over Greta's features, as she answered, — "Andrew, do you stand firm, and yet ask me to act against my convictions? My Lord and Savior will give me strength to sacrifice earthly happiness for heavenly joy."



"Greta, you have never loved me truly."

"Andrew!" The word sounded like a cry of pain.

He looked at her, and stretched out his arms toward her, but she covered her face with her hands and sobbed aloud. When she looked up after awhile, Andrew was gone. She remained a long time before the dying fire, praying to God, and interceding also for the soul of her erring lover, until at last calmness and peace came with the sure conviction that the Lord would do all things well.

The next day the letter was sent away to Henry von Zütphen, and in great suspense the Rev. Nicholas Boje, as well as Wiebge Junge, awaited the answer. It could not reach them immediately, and they had to possess their souls in patience.

The letter found Henry von Zütphen sitting in the midst of a company of friends. He read it aloud, and immediately there arose a storm. He must not go; those people in Dithmarschen were not to be trusted; he was so greatly needed where he was; why should he want to leave them when God's blessing was resting so visibly on his labors?—and much else beside.

Henry bethought himself awhile, then replied: "Dear friends, is not the call which comes to me today the same as once came to Paul the Apostle, 'Come over and help us?' You have valiant men here, who declare to you the pure Word of God, guiding your souls in the right way; in Meldorf there is no one who does this,



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and you have heard that an ardent longing for the truth dwells in many hearts; therefore, be comforted, for it is God's will that I should go."

"You do not know the people of Dithmarschen," exclaimed one of his friends excitedly, "I tell you, you are running into danger, for even though many among them may be devoted to the new doctrine, most of them cling to the old. Think of it, Prior Torneborch is in Meldorf and has a great following, he will spare no means of destroying you."

Henry von Zütphen replied with a smile, — "Do you not think that the blessed Lord is stronger than the prior? In His name I will go." Then suddenly becoming very serious, he continued: "I can also suffer in His name if He has so willed."

His friends said no more, and that very evening the brave man despatched his answer, to the effect that he would come the first week in Advent.

When Nicholas Boje received the letter in Meldorf he was greatly moved, and folding his hands he thanked the Almighty who was to show kindness to him and to so many souls hungering for salvation, and to fill them with good things. Then he put on his cloak and hastened to Wiebge Junge.

"He is coming!" cried he triumphantly, standing in the doorway; "think of it, Henry von Zütphen is



coming! Madam, your prayers avail much at the throne of God!"

Wiebge Junge looked at him with her clear gray eyes and replied, "Reverend sir, no more than those of other upright Christians; you surely know that 'the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,' and 'the violent take it by force.'"

They talked for some time over the good news, and then the pastor went home, his heart filled with joy.

Henry von Zütphen kept his word. In spite of the continued efforts of his friends to dissuade him, he started on the Monday after the first of Advent, by way of Brunsbüttel, for Meldorf, arriving there the end of the same week.

What rejoicing there was when the news spread, "Henry von Zütphen is here!" and it seemed the parsonage would never be free from visitors who came to ask if it were really true.

Late that same evening Greta came to Wiebge Junge's and sat down beside her at the fire. The sweet young face was thin and pale, but her eyes shone wonderfully clear.

"Godmother," said she, "I have been struggling hard to find a way out, but none has appeared, and although it hurts me more than my own suffering to see Andrew going about so gloomy and sad, yet I cannot do otherwise than acknowledge Him who has helped me



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to an understanding of the true faith. And now that we have a teacher here, it seems to me that I shall be quite happy, because he will teach us heavenly truths."

Wiebge Junge nodded, her heart full to overflowing with praise. She was like a starving man before whom had finally been placed a full dish. "Greta," said she solemnly, "the Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad; and as for you, do not despair, if you have tasted heavenly joy, earthly happiness may also be bestowed upon you, for God is the All-powerful."

But as great the joy which reigned among the friends and advocates of the new religion, so little was the favor that it found among its adversaries.

On the same evening that Wiebge Junge talked with Greta, Prior Torneborch sat in his room in the Augustinian monastery. His features showed great disturbance and his eyes were blazing with an unsteady light. Finally he turned his head and listened. Steps were heard outside and presently a monk entered. The prior hastened toward him and said anxiously, "Well?"

The newcomer's features gave evidence of tremendous excitement and without delay he exclaimed, "Your reverence, everything is as you have heard. Henry von Zütphen is at Nicholas Boje's, and he will be the cause of a great sedition here."

The prior motioned him to be calm but Brother Philip went on, earnestly: "The people are in a frenzy



of joy, and you will find out soon enough, your reverence, that the number of the faithful will be small. You know how people run after anything new, and the delight that all hearts feel in excitement."

The prior controlled himself with an effort. He did not want it to be noticed how much this matter disturbed him. "It is well, my son, we shall see who will gain the victory. I shall not be idle. Bring me news of everything that happens, for we must be vigilant."

Brother Philip hastened away. The prior folded his arms and walked back and forth with rapid steps. The night fell, hour after hour passed, and while Prior Torneborch forged his sinister plans Nicholas Boje and his guest rested in peaceful slumber, disturbed by no thought of what the near future might have in store for them. They were safe in the protection of their God.

When the day dawned the prior made himself ready in all secrecy for a journey to Heide.

Dithmarschen was at that time a kind of peasant-republic under the bishopric of Bremen. It was divided into four provinces, each of which had a governor, appointed by the Archbishop of Bremen, and twelve elders chosen from the province itself. These constituted the highest authority in the land, and at the time in question they were in conclave at Heide. This Torneborch knew, and he accordingly lost no time in going thither.



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It was Saturday and as soon as he arrived, he had the council hastily called together.

When they were assembled, he explained the situation to them, that a heretic preacher, Henry von Zütphen, had come from Bremen to Meldorf, having been sent for it was true, for there were many tares among the wheat in the said city — and that as much ado would soon be made over him as had been made in Bremen. The whole community would be perverted.

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed one of the administrators, "is it as bad as that? It does not seem possible."

"Not possible?" said the prior in sneering tones. "My dear Peter Nanne, your own sister leads in everything. It was she in fact who was the chief instrument in bringing the wolf into the fold."

An oath escaped from the one addressed and a flush of anger spread over his face.

"My sister, Wiebge Junge?" he cried. "She shall answer for it."

"We will not talk about that now," answered Torneborch. "I beg of you, sir, first to advise with your companions and make clear to them the danger of the situation. You understand it, sir, and I can depend upon you."

He put his hand confidently on Peter Nanne's shoulder, who felt himself much honored and flattered. The clerk of the council, Günter Werner, was also drawn



to Torneborch's side, and these two laid the case before the assembly after this fashion :

If heresy should gain a foothold in their midst, the worship of the Virgin Mary would soon decay, dissension and uproar would arise, and the country might lose its freedom ; that on the other hand it would be a meritorious thing in God's sight if they burned the mischief-maker at the stake.

The suddenness of such a proposition frightened Prior Torneborch himself a little, and he opposed it with the false pretense that they should let Christian mildness reign, that they must allow the erring one room for repentance, and more such phrases. They debated vehemently, some siding with the prior and some with Peter Nanne, until finally they agreed not to pronounce an immediate sentence of death. Accordingly they wrote two letters, one to the parish of Meldorf, and the other to Nicholas Boje, to the effect that they must not let the monk preach, they must drive him away under threat of the severest penalty of law.

Filled with malicious joy, Torneborch departed again. Now he could not escape him, this hated opponent. Late that night he was in Meldorf again, where he was awaited by his faithful Philip. Not brooking even the night's delay, he ordered the latter to go to the parsonage, to waken the sleepers, and give Nicholas Boje the letter.



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The monk hastened to perform the commission. He was obliged to wait a long time before they opened the door for him, and the pastor was not a little astonished to receive such a messenger at such an hour.

By the dim light of his little lamp he read the vicar's letter, then folded it thoughtfully and said, "My friend, the Council of Forty-Eight have nothing to do with church matters. I cannot obey their command. Such an affair is the business of our own people and officials."

"Is this your answer to his excellency, the prior?" asked brother Philip, shortly.

"Yes, my friend."

"And what does the heretic say to it?"

"Henry of Zütphen shall give his own answer. Wait a little, I will report the matter to him in his room."

Undismayed the man of God listened to the tidings, asked what was customary and legal, and declared: "I shall follow my calling. I shall preach as long as the community wishes it, for we must obey God rather than men. If it is God's will that I should die in Dithmarschen, then heaven is as near to me here as any place else. I have to shed my blood in God's cause in any event."

With astonishment Nicholas Boje looked into the speaker's peaceful countenance, upon which there appeared no trace of anxiety or fear. "Do you want to



make your views known to the monk below yourself?" he asked.

"With all my heart," he replied, and both went below, where the impatient messenger waited.

Henry von Zütphen told him the same that he had said to his friend, and Brother Philip went away furious, to carry their answer to the prior.

The latter was speechless with surprise and rage, but at last said: "Let us watch carefully the trend of affairs. We are still at the helm, and heresy shall not so easily gain an entrance."

The next morning the people thronged to the church where the Rev. Nicholas Boje usually preached. Every seat to the very last was taken; nevertheless it was as still as death when Henry von Zütphen entered the pulpit. He preached on the Gospel for the Second Sunday in Advent, Luke 21, 25-36: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon earth distress of nations with perplexity," etc. It was a powerful sermon, so that all the listeners were inspired and there was only one opinion among them: "The Holy Ghost speaks through him, for he has kindled and fired us." In the afternoon he preached on the Epistle lesson, and the throng of people who were hungering for salvation was even greater than at the morning hour.



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In the evening Greta sat beside Wiebge Junge, no longer pale and sad. Her eyes beamed and her cheeks glowed.

"Godmother," she said, "I have no regret for what I have done. Although it will be a life-long grief to me that Andrew and I must go different ways, I know now that my heavenly Father will take me up and give me those everlasting possessions whose glories cannot be imagined."

"Can you not persuade Andrew to go but a single time to hear our preacher?"

"He was there this morning and looks gloomier than ever. He has only scoffing remarks for that which fills my soul with peace. I felt uncomfortable in his presence, and when he noticed it he became still more ill-humored."

"The spirit of God will nevertheless do His work upon his soul, only let us not grow weary in lifting our hearts in prayer for him!"

"When shall we hear the man of God preach again?"

"Wednesday and Friday, and that too twice a day; he wants to give something to everybody."

"Nothing shall prevent me from going to hear him, godmother; I think his words have given me courage to stand against the whole world!"

As Wiebge Junge said, Henry von Zütphen preached thus often during the week, and the people came in



crowds from every direction. He soon gained more and more friends, who begged him incessantly to spend the Christmas season with them, that their souls might be further refreshed.

But Prior Torneborch was not idle either. He appealed again to the Council of Forty-Eight, and they commanded that Henry should not be allowed to preach under penalty of a heavy fine; and that the parish should send representatives to Heide on Monday, when the Council was to meet.

The people of Meldorf were filled with indignation that such a letter should be written, contrary as it was to their constitution and to custom. "We cannot and must not endure this," they exclaimed; "they go too far. We will not give up our rights for them," and all agreed in this. They decided to send delegates who in a friendly but firm spirit, should inform the Council of their attitude.

Whilst conflict and excitement thus reigned among the parties, Henry von Zütphen worked bravely to the honor of his Master. He preached, and those who had heavy hearts received counsel and help from him. O, how lovingly he dealt with doubting souls, and how differently from what they had been accustomed to from the monks and many of the priests. A gentle breeze seemed to pass through the parish, and all praised the Most High who had bestowed such favor upon them.



In the meantime the delegates at Heide did not accomplish much. The gentlemen there were too much enraged, and they grew more and more angry and excited as the discussion progressed. Finally an old man, Peter Detlefs from Delve, arose and said: "We all know indeed, dear friends, that in all lands there is great discord over religion, and people like us, uneducated and ignorant in such matters, cannot judge in these affairs. Let it be our decision that we refer the whole question to the General Council, which is to be held in a short time, as our secretary reports. What our good neighbors hold to and keep, that, I think we too shall accept. If it should be as they say, that God's Word is not taught with sufficient clearness, and there is some one who can teach it more clearly and purely, we will not forbid him, for we can have no uprising here. Therefore let every one be content and let the matter rest until Easter; meanwhile, what is right and wrong will be made manifest."

This proposition of the wise man was accepted, although they of Heide were not altogether satisfied. But the Meldorfians went home happy and the community rejoiced greatly that they might, for the time being, at least, see their beloved Henry von Zütphen in the pulpit. Afterwards, they thought, the matter would continue to go on in the right way. Alas, bitterly were they to be disappointed!



When the result of the meeting at Heide had become known, and even while the people were rejoicing together, Prior Torneborch stood among his monks and other enemies of the new doctrine who had joined them, goading them against the faithful witness and his teachings. He knew that it was not advisable to allow the fire which he had kindled and fanned again to grow cold, and he well understood the great danger there was in putting off a decision until Easter. The outcome of this meeting was that he, with some of his faithful ones, among them Peter Nanne, went to Lunden to confer with the monks there. They called together some noted men for consultation, but these did not wish to take part in the matter and consented at last merely to write once more to Meldorf. Upon which Torneborch arose, exclaiming vehemently, "No writing, they will write again and you will be entangled in heresy. We must get at it in another way. The best remedy is to take the heretic at night and burn him, before the authorities or the people are aware of it!"

"Well said!" cried Peter Nanne; "and leave to me the execution of the plan, your excellency. I shall count it a special honor, and will thus right the wrong that my sister has committed in this connection."

The prior gave him his blessing, and the matter was accordingly arranged. Nanne went to the clerk Günter, whom he soon won over.



"To be sure we can't do it alone," said Peter Nanne, "we must have help."

"Let me provide for that," replied the clerk eagerly. "I know a number of strong, bold men and these again will draw in others. There will be no lack of hands to share in the business." They continued talking together a long time, and when they separated it was with the words: "The 10th of December, near midnight — at Hemingstadt."

Hemingstadt lies half a mile north of Meldorf, and on the 10th of December of the aforesaid year there was a secret going and coming there until gradually five hundred men were assembled. When the vesper bell rang they started. First they took possession of all the roads that led to Meldorf in order that none might go thither and give warning. Then one of the leaders stepped forward and informed the crowd what was really expected of them. Most of them had had no intimation of it, and they regretted having come to burn a man, even if he were a heretic. It was a work far from their liking. The ringleaders first ridiculed and then threatened them. The monks brought up some barrels of beer and drew for each as much as he wanted until the crowd, silly with drink, allowed themselves to be led where it pleased the ringleaders to take them.

On account of this delay it had grown late, and when they entered Meldorf it was striking midnight. A



profound stillness lay upon the town. At the convent only was there light and stir. Thither the crowd moved and the gates were willingly and gladly thrown open.

The prior had provided torches, which they distributed. The procession then quickly moved toward the parsonage.

"How will we get in without making an uproar?" asked Peter Nanne.

Whereupon a tall man stepped from the ranks and insolently said: "My name is John Maass. I am acquainted here. I will climb through the garret window and unbolt the door from within so that you may have free access to the reverend gentleman."

This was done, and it was not long until they were inside. Some pressed into the sleeping room of Nicholas Boje, wakened him roughly, and when he was dressed forced him into the street, saying that he must go with them. Others, however, remonstrated, saying he should be set free, as they had no authority to take him. In the tumult poor Nicholas Boje was handled very roughly.

Meanwhile others had rushed into the house and were shouting, "Where is the monk? where is the monk?" until they reached his little room. He was dragged out of bed, and hardly given time to put on necessary clothing. Then amidst blows they tied his hands behind his back and he was taken out.



"Unbind him!" cried Peter Nanne, who was greatly distressed by such cruel treatment even towards an enemy; "he will go alone."

Accordingly they did so and handed him over to a ruffian, Bolke Johann, from the village of Lieth, who was to be his keeper on the march. This monster however took delight in leading him through mud-puddles and over thin ice, which cut his feet until they were covered with blood.

In Hemingstadt they stopped again. Henry was ready to faint. So exhausted was he, that it was almost impossible for him to go further, and he modestly asked if he might not ride.

At this the mob laughed aloud and one cried out: "Are we to furnish a heretic with a horse yet? How did you come into the country? And what have you lost by coming?"

In mild and kindly accents he answered, "You, or at least your countrymen, called me. I came at the command of the Master, whose will it is that all men should be helped. I love your souls and wanted to save them. I—"

"Be still!" cried a voice from the crowd. "Away with him, away with him! He will make heretics of you all, if you listen to him."

And so they hurried on to Heide, which was still half a mile distant. There they took him into a cellar



of one of the houses, and carried on every sort of mockery and rough sport with him, till at last clerk Günter went down to him.

"Henry von Zütphen," he began, "you know that we accuse you of heresy and I ask you now, whether you wish to be sent to the Bishop at Bremen or to receive your punishment here at Heide?"

Calm and self-possessed the latter answered, "If I have taught or done anything that is unchristian, you have a right to punish me for it. God's will be done."

He wanted to say more, but the clerk quickly cried out, "Hear, dear friends, he wants to die in Dithmarschen!"

Henry sank exhausted on a bed of straw. He well knew that he might expect no mercy, but he also knew that the Lord was with him. His soul grew calm, yea, even joyous within him, and he found himself able to view the way before him without anxiety or dismay. Once more he said to himself, "God's will be done," then fell asleep as peacefully as a child.

The dusk of the morning still lay over the marketplace at Heide. The winter day was dawning dimly, when the mob assembled, and a general council took place as to what more should be done with the heretic. Most of them were still drunk, and soon an ominous roar resounded: "To the stake with him! to the stake!" And some whose voices were somewhat clearer added, "Thus



we shall gain honor today from God and man,—he must die!"

Then the command was given: "Let those who brought the monk provide themselves with arms and lead him forth to the fire."

Forthwith, the faithful, patient man of God was tightly bound and then driven out east of Heide where the fire was already lighted.

When they passed by Lütjenheide a woman was standing at her door and when she saw the pitiful spectacle, she wept bitterly. But Henry von Zütphen comforted her sweetly: "Dear woman, do not weep for me, since this is the will of God."

Soon they reached the fire where the ill-used man sank to the ground from sheer exhaustion. Then the governor approached him and pronounced sentence with these words: "This miscreant has preached against the mother of God, and the Christian faith, for which cause, in the stead of my gracious Bishop of Bremen, I sentence him to death by fire."

Henry looked firmly into the speaker's face and replied: "I am not guilty of what you charge, nevertheless, The will of God be done!"

Thereupon he folded his hands and said the creed, then raised his eyes to heaven and prayed: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do! Thy name alone is holy, heavenly Father."



*For the Sake of the Faith.*

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But not altogether friendless was he to start out on his last journey. While he sat there, a disturbance was noticed among the assembled multitude and a woman made her way through the crowd. It was Wiebge Junge. No sooner had she heard what had occurred than she locked her house and hastened after her friend. Nicholas Boje would have liked to do the same, but he lay at home bruised, sick and miserable. And so, brave Wiebge Junge went her way alone. When she saw the evil plight in which Henry sat there, and how patiently he bore his sufferings, her heart burned with pain and with eager longing to save him even yet. She went to his side and boldly facing the mob, cried out: "What do you mean? What are you doing? It was I who called him. I brought him into the country. Strike me, beat me, yea, and I will pay a thousand dollars beside, if you will let the man go free only till next Monday, that the whole land may hear his case and sentence him!"

How soothing these words were to the prisoner! He took it that the Lord wished to give him this comfort on his last journey, and praised Him for it. But when he would have thanked Wiebge Junge for her words, she was gone from him. The mob had thrust her away.

Then began his martyrdom. Over that scene so terrible we draw a veil.

Wiebge Junge no longer looked back. Overcome with sorrow, and sobbing convulsively she went her way.



*"A Good and Faithful Servant" (1521).*

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Then a hand was laid on her arm, and when she looked up frightened, she saw Andrew.

"Are the Hemmlings also in it when there is a burning at the stake?" asked she with sharp bitterness. Then she was silent, for she saw with wonder that the young man looked quite otherwise than in former days. His expression was no longer gloomy and ill-humored, even though deep sorrow was delineated in his features.

"What are you doing here?" she continued, more kindly.

"I wanted to revel in the sight of a cowardly heretic, and found instead a brave man of God, who has only words of goodness and pardon for his enemies," replied Andrew, with choking voice. "O, Wiebge Junge, how I loathe the actions of the inhuman multitude, and how my heart is drawn to this man who prays for his enemies!"

"Will you not go home with me, Andrew?"

"No, not yet, I will look upon his sufferings to the last, dreadful as they are to see; there is something so divine in his way of bearing them."

"Will you come and bring me tidings this evening?"

"Yes, I will come."

"May the Almighty grant that this good man be soon released and received into everlasting glory," said Wiebge Junge, hastening on with stifled sobs.



### *For the Sake of the Faith.*

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But Andrew returned and pressed into the crowd, that he might see Henry's martyrdom to the end.

It was in the evening of the same day. In profound grief Wiebge Junge sat before the fire and with a shudder thought of the flames devouring that beloved friend. But at last her soul grew calm, as she reflected that his sufferings were ended and he had gained the crown of eternal life. Returning from Heide, she had gone to Nicholas Boje's, who was confined to his study, seriously injured. All hope of rescue gone, they mourned together, and afterwards knelt down and out of the depths cried unto the Lord. Now she had been waiting some time for Andrew. At last quick steps approached, and the young man whom she was expecting entered. Wiebge Junge looked searchingly into his pale, sad face, then she drew a seat for him beside her own, threw wood upon the coals, and as he continued to sit silent and motionless, she laid her hand upon his arm and asked, hesitatingly, "Andrew, was it very bad?"

"O, so terrible, so inexpressibly terrible! I cannot talk about it." Tears ran down the strong man's cheeks.

Wiebge Junge wept softly. At length she spoke again. "And what of him, Andrew?"

"He stood firm. Nothing could frighten him. Under torture and derision he witnessed a good confession. O, such a man, Wiebge Junge! A doctrine which gives such happiness and strength must be the



*"A Good and Faithful Servant" (1521).*

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right one. I am conquered and shall seek and cling to it."

There was a flash of joy in the eyes of the woman, wearied with so much weeping, and she replied joyously, "Then are you the first fruits of his death, and we will praise God who has thus ever blessed the martyr's blood and made it the seed of the Church."

Again the two were silent, lost in sorrowful thoughts. At last Wiebge Junge said, "Andrew, you must tell me; did the fire blaze up quickly?"

He shook his head. "No, it did not want to burn. Then John of Neunkirchen with a hammer struck him on the breast a blow that stilled the heart. God be praised, that he was thus freed from unspeakable torture."

Again there was silence between them, they had not heard a soft knocking. Now the door opened and Greta appeared there, but stopped in dismay when she saw Andrew sitting by the fire. But he arose, went toward her and clasped her hand with a warm pressure. "Greta, I am one of yours, Henry von Zütphen has conquered me. I shall learn to become what he was. And you, — you will help me?"

A deep blush suffused the sweet face of the girl. She looked up into her lover's beaming eyes and answered, "Andrew, you know that I will. May God help us in our great weakness!"



*For the Sake of the Faith.*

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Then he put his arm around her, and both went towards Wiebge Junge, who said earnestly, "Children, joy and sorrow have come so close together that one scarcely knows her own feelings. But may the Almighty bless you!" Then suddenly recalling the true situation, she asked, "Andrew, what will your parents say?"

"My parents too think otherwise today than heretofore; they have at least gone so far that they will hinder us in nothing. My father was at Heide also today."

Wiebge Junge clasped the girl in her arms, then all three sat down before the fire. Andrew did not release his sweetheart's hand. They spoke but little, their hearts were too full of mingled feelings.

At length the young man arose. "Come, Greta, we will go home. It is your home too, now, to which we go."

"Yes," interrupted Wiebge Junge, "your earthly home! but do not forget that there is an everlasting habitation!"

"No, godmother, it has always encouraged and comforted me: 'In My Father's house are many mansions.'"

"Many mansions," repeated Wiebge Junge; "yes, and our dear friend Henry is now in one of them, and it must be well with him there after all that he suffered here. God be praised forever and ever!"



*"A Good and Faithful Servant" (1521).*

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"Amen," said the two young people, as they went out into the starlight splendor of the clear winter's night.

The memory of Henry von Zütphen, the faithful witness, has lived throughout the centuries. In the year 1824 the field where his torture and death occurred, was consecrated as a burying ground, and a monument was erected there to his memory. Since 1847 his name has been in the Schleswig-Holstein calendar under the date December 10th. This is all beautiful and praiseworthy, but more glorious than all is the fact that his name is written in heaven, that he is clothed in white raiment, and that he carries the palm-branch which the Savior Himself placed in his hand after he had proved himself a witness "faithful unto death."





## **"Fear Thou Not, for I am With Thee."**

**(1524)**

It was in the beginning of the year 1524. Not far from the little town of Kenzingen, in Breisgau, there lived a rich Austrian gentleman (for since 1367 the country had belonged to Austria), who had a number of large estates and who lived a life of careless ease.

The case was different with his faithful accountant, Berthold Amsteg, who had for a number of years been in his employ, and who in godly contentment ate his scanty bread. The latter had once had ambitious plans for his life, and had made considerable progress in his course of study. But there had occurred that which was to give his life an entirely different direction. This was the blowing of the new spiritual currents from Wittenberg.

At first, like many others he had been frightened by the agitation that stirred the religious life of the times, but he soon opened his heart to the new teaching and welcomed it with joy. A few years before he had brought into his home a young bride, and her heart too had hailed release from spiritual fetters.

But it seemed to them necessary to keep their faith secret. The young accountant's master, strict man that he was, was of the opposite persuasion, and required



that all who were in his employ should be of his own faith. The question had often arisen in Berthold Amsteg's mind whether it was right for him thus to refrain from a public confession of his belief, but a look at his dear wife and his little three year old daughter had always silenced him. What would become of them if he should lose his place and living? To be sure, he trusted in God, but he was not yet a hero of the faith. Trial had first to do its work before he could become such.

It was on the feast-day of the Three Kings, and Berthold sat with his wife Rosanna by the great chimney-place where blazed the fire of knotty fir wood. In the next room lay their little Sabina, sleeping the sound sleep of innocent childhood. The mother was spinning by the bright light of the fire, and Amsteg sat looking thoughtfully into the glowing hearth.

"What are you thinking about, my dear?" asked his wife, and the look which she turned upon him as she spoke was one full of the tenderest affection.

The man sighed deeply, and for a moment made no reply. Then he said: "I was just thinking of all the great plans with which I began life, and how they have remained unrealized."

"All the threads of our life are in the hand of the Lord. Remember, my dear, — 'not a sparrow falleth without His notice'."



"Yes, I have that comfort; I would count no sacrifice too great for the peace which the new teaching has brought to me. But now and then I find myself grieving a little to think that Rosanna Amsteg must put up with a living so poor that it is often a problem how to make ends meet."

"Berthold," she exclaimed reproachfully, "have I ever been dissatisfied or discouraged?"

"Neither, my dear."

"Then do not pain me with such words."

Lovingly Berthold Amsteg embraced his brave wife, whose eyes shone as they looked into his.

"Berthold," she said, "I feel happy enough to sing. Can't we try one of our nice hymns?"

"Which one?"

"There has been running through my mind all day the tune,—

"Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord."

"Yes, I like that one, too," said Berthold; and in sweet, clear tones they both began to sing. The husband presently took the bass. The singing gathered confidence as it went along, until when the last stanza was reached, the little room fairly rang with the joyful melody:



*"Fear Thou Not, for I am With Thee" (1524).*

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"Lord, make us ready with Thy powers;  
Strengthen the flesh in weaker hours,  
That as good warriors we may force  
Through life and death to Thee our course!"

It was the next day, and the morning was well along. The accountant was in the room set apart for his work in the manor-house, and was busy. He was writing and figuring, making an entry first here and then there, and was so engrossed in his work that he did not hear a small side door open and his employer enter. For a moment the latter watched him, then clearing his throat, he approached and spoke:

"Amsteg, who was it singing in your cottage last night?"

For an instant the one addressed was startled. Then looking his questioner straight in the face, he replied: "My wife and I."

"Indeed? And yet you know, do you not, that I will not have in my employ any persons who are given to singing heretical songs?"

"Yes, I am aware of that, sir, but —"

"Just hush. I know exactly what you are going to say. I am familiar with the way dissenters talk, and I have long been of the secret opinion that you and your wife were leaving the true Church. Had you not been so useful to me, you would have long since received your walking papers. But to-day I want to tell you, you are



dismissed. We have nothing further to do with each other."

Berthold Amsteg opened his mouth to reply, but his employer abruptly checked him, and turning, left the room. Once more, however, he came back.

"You understand," he said, "I might make a deal of trouble for you, but I don't wish to have any stir over the matter. You have been paid your salary to the end of the year, but here is a little something extra." He laid a gold piece upon the table and went away.

The first impulse of the accountant was to throw the coin at the feet of the hard-hearted man, but he mastered his feelings. Did he not profess to have a small and humble opinion of himself? — Then why might not the Lord mean him to accept this alms? Had He not said, "Before they call will I hear them," and might this not be a provision against untold need? Slowly he pocketed the money, straightened up his books, and put his desk in order for his successor. Then he leaned his head upon his hands, for his heart grew heavy within him as he thought of his wife and child. Where could he go?

Not long, however, was he oppressed with such anxious questions and forebodings, for like a ray of light there came into his heart the words of yesterday's hymn:

"Lord, make us ready with Thy powers,  
Strengthen the flesh in weaker hours."



"The Lord will provide," said Amsteg to himself, and buttoning his little shoulder cape about him, he went out strengthened and comforted.

His entrance at home at such an unaccustomed hour told his wife everything. She came toward him, and taking his benumbed hands in hers, said:

"Berthold, we are homeless."

"Yes, my darling, but the Lord will prepare us a place where we may lay our heads. He kissed her tenderly, and the two stood grief-stricken and silent. They had been so happy in their little home.

At last Rosanna looked up at her husband and asked: "When must we go?"

He hesitated to reply. He shrank from no suffering for himself, but how hard for her, who had been reared in comfort, would be the deprivation and need which had overtaken them.

As he stood there, silent, the firm tones of his wife's voice fell upon his ear: "I know, my dear; we must go to-day."

"Yes," he replied. "Are you afraid, Rosanna?"

"Afraid?" She looked up at him with eyes that were serious enough, but with no shadow of fear in them. "Afraid? I would be, and with reason, did I not know the promise: 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee'."

They sat down by the table to consider where they could go. Rosanna's parents had been well to do, but



upon their death, some three years before, it developed that they had suffered heavy losses, and they left nothing in the way of earthly goods.

"Let us go to Auntie Salome's," said Rosanna, finally.

"To Aunt Salome's?" exclaimed Berthold, in surprise. "Have you forgotten that scarcely two years ago she forbade the house to her only grandson because he was an advocate of the new faith?"

"Two years is a long time, and it may be that this very experience has caused her to know more about our belief. We must try her, Berthold. Kenzingen is only a two hours' walk, and if she will not receive us, we will find some one kind enough to take us in. Auntie has her own house, and she can easily spare us the small room which we would need. The landlord, heartless as he is, will doubtless see that our few things here are sent to us."

While they were talking, little Sabina came in. She went and leaned her yellow curls against her father and asked, "Is it a holiday, papa?"

"For me, yes, little one. We are going to Kenzingen yet to-day."

"To town, papa? O, goody! Miss Lizzie told me that the windows there hang full of sausages and cookies, and people may just go in and get them, if they have money."



Clapping her hands in glee, the child went dancing about the little room, singing, "To Kenzingen! To Kenzingen!"

In spite of their sadness, her parents had to smile, and Berthold taking his wife's hand in his, said, "Yes the little ones know how to take it, Rosanna. They clap their hands at trouble, and shout praises to God."

In silence they began to get their things together, packing the most important into two bundles, to be carried with them. That last little noonday meal was watered with secret tears, and when it had been eaten they were ready to start. Rosanna had up to this time kept up courage, but as she crossed the threshold and left behind all that which had been so dear and precious to her, she could no longer control her grief. She covered her face with her hands and sobbed aloud.

Little Sabina looked up at her in wonder, but her husband, taking her gently by the hand, said:

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee."

Sadly she wiped her eyes, and with hearts uplifted to God they left and went their way.

It was already growing dusk when they reached Kenzingen, and a few moments later they found themselves standing in front of the rather high, narrow house which belonged to Aunt Salome. Here and there in the upper stories light showed from the windows. Below, however, where Aunt Salome herself lived, the shutters.



were already closed. As a child Rosanna had often visited her aunt, and she expected to find her an ill-tempered and harsh-featured old lady. With many a heart-throb, therefore, the homeless little group entered, and passing through the vestibule, knocked on the door of the living room.

"Come in," said a voice that was by no means unfriendly.

Entering, they found themselves standing in a blaze of light from the great wood fire that burned in the wide chimney-place.

The old aunt was sitting on a brown wooden stool spinning. She looked up without speaking, then rising and coming nearer, she cried out: "Rosanna! and you too, Berthold! Is it weal or woe that brings you to auntie's house?"

"It is woe, dear auntie," replied Rosanna; "but we are seeking a stopping place for only a little while, because the winter is hard and we cannot go about the country with our little one."

"But I thought you had employment, and were getting along."

"Yes, until now," said Berthold, "but my employer has discharged me because we acknowledged ourselves followers of the new teaching."

"Is that so? And you expect me to harbor heretics?"



"We knew that you clung to the old faith, dear auntie," answered Rosanna; "but we knew too that you would not turn your own flesh and blood out into the cold of winter; and it is only for a little time that we would share your hospitality."

"If I thought now as I did but a little while back, I would certainly have closed my door against you; but I too have had my eyes opened to see the grace of God that has been offered to all the world. I am trying earnestly to learn more about Luther's doctrine, and I am convinced that it is nothing but good and that he is right."

With a cry of joy the young woman threw her arms around the old lady's neck, while Berthold folded his hands. As for little Sabina, time was growing long for her. She plucked at Auntie's dress.

"Auntie, where are the cookies and sausages that they said hung in the windows in Kenzingen?"

They all smiled, and Rosanna explained the reason for the child's question.

"You shall see them to-morrow, little one," said Auntie Salome, comfortingly; "and you shall have some pennies too, that you may go in and buy." Then she added, "I am sure we will be good friends, because I love children."

This was spoken with a sigh, and a cloud rested upon her face. She turned away, and began to set out something for the refreshment of the travelers.



Afterward, when the little maid was quietly sleeping, the mother and father sat for a long time with Auntie Salome by the fire. Rosanna could not but look at the latter. What had become of that harsh face? Her countenance had a gentle, kindly expression, and a pair of bright eyes looked out from under the white brows. They had decided among themselves that they would all stay together until Lent. Possibly Berthold might find work in the meantime, but if not, he would then go further in search of employment and a livelihood. Their Auntie had a comfortable little room which she would empty for them.

When everything had been settled, and the three were sitting there in silence, Rosanna laid her hand upon the old lady's arm and asked, hesitatingly: "Auntie, dear, won't you tell us how matters stand between you and Andrew?"

The one addressed looked down at the floor. Her face betrayed the pain she felt, and it was with an effort that she kept back the tears. In a trembling voice she replied:

"We parted in anger. He was inflexible in his Lutheran faith, and I did him wrong. I threatened to prosecute him, to bring him before the church authorities, and much else. Of course I would never have done it. But he was my only grandson, and fearing that he was



*"Fear Thou Not, for I am With Thee" (1524).*

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going to spiritual destruction, I wanted to frighten him. But he stood firm, and only said:

"'If you think, grandmother, that I am bringing disgrace upon you, I will go away'."

"'Go,' I replied, harshly, — but I had no idea that he would do so. Nevertheless, one morning he was gone. He left a kindly message for me with Mrs. Weisenberger, who was helping me in the house, and gave her a little note, reading, — but wait, I'd rather you should see it for yourselves."

She drew from her dress a little leather pouch, and took out of it a slip of paper, upon which was written:

DEAR GRANDMOTHER: For you this verse — "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin;" and for me — "Fear thou not, for I am with thee." Let your heart be at peace, — if you shall call me back I will come.

Berthold Amsteg read the lines, handed them back to Auntie and said, "Have you sent for him?"

She shook her head.

"A hundred times have I been on the point of doing so, but always put it off. I wanted to be clearer in my own mind, and besides — why should I call him back here, since no one knows how long it will be safe here for protestants?"

"Do you have any idea that hatred and persecution will reach this far?"



"Yes, my dear Berthold, it may not be at once, but the enemies of the new teaching are active everywhere."

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee," said Berthold softly. Then Rosanna asked, "Do you know where Andrew is?"

"To be sure. He went to Strasburg, where Matthew Zell is located, who since 1518 has been the preacher at the Cathedral of St. Lawrence. He is the right kind of a preacher and pastor, too, one of Luther's kind. His care for the forsaken and the persecuted is like that of a father. He was married within the past year, and his wife is just as good, brave, and sensible as he is. They are a kind-hearted pair. During Advent there was a peddler here who had been all over the country with his trinkets, and had also been in Strasburg. When I asked him about the condition of things there, he began at once to sing the praises of Matthew Zell and his wife Catharine, and to tell what a blessing they were to the city. It made me glad. They will see that Andrew is not in need, don't you think?"

"You may rest easy, Auntie. The fame of that worthy man and his faithful wife has gone out over all the land, and on account of them Strasburg has become a shining light for the distressed and the outcast."

"Have you never sent any word to him, Auntie?"



"No, how could I? I myself cannot write, and besides — well, I did not always think as I do now, but held a little spite against Andrew."

"To-morrow, I am going to dispatch a letter to him, and —"

"Yes, yes, do so; O, that will ease my heart, for I have long repented my course toward him. But how will a letter find him in that large city?"

"Let us send it in care of Mrs. Catharine Zell. She will search him out."

It had been a long time since Auntie Salome slept as peacefully as she did that night; and she awoke happy, for her dreams had been of her dear Andrew. Now he would soon know that she was not angry with him, but bore him the same love as of old.

Two days after this the scanty furniture of the little family was brought in front of Aunt Salome's house, and the little room in the third story was comfortably fitted up. Berthold Amsteg began to look for work, but before he found any, God's hand intervened to steer the bark of his life into other waters.

It might have been a week or more since the exiles had been taken in by Aunt Salome. There had been a thaw, and while as a rule, January does not relax, but keeps a grim face, nevertheless at this time the weather was sunny and the air soft.



*For the Sake of the Faith.*

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Rosanna had gone with little Sabina for a walk through the town. They had seen the cookies and the sausages, and the child had some of each in the little basket on her arm. She prattled along at her mother's side, and the latter was pleased to think how well she seemed to like her new surroundings.

It was already growing dark when they reached the house, and the entire group seated themselves by the hearth. The father brought a copy of the New Testament from the large wall cupboard, and said: "Let us gather a little manna. I feel a longing for it, and besides my heart is heavy on account of the things I heard whispered about town to-day. The Catholics don't propose to stand forever idle. We are a thorn in the flesh to them."

Before either of the women could make any reply, there was a knock at the door, and in came the worthy Mr. Aschert, a brass founder. He was one of Aunt Salome's good friends and neighbors, and was accustomed frequently to drop in for an hour after supper to chat with her.

This evening his face, usually so pleasant, bore a serious look, and after a few words of greeting he spoke.

"It is an important matter that brings me here. I have found out that evil is in store for us who hold to the new faith; they mean to drive us out of the town, and that very soon."



The two women turned a frightened look on the speaker, who continued, addressing Berthold:

"You and your wife have been marked among those who must go. You, Mrs. Berg, may be permitted to remain, — I will find out about that later."

"And you, Mr. Aschert?"

"I too, must go, and I thank God that He counts me worthy to confess His name. I have neither wife nor child, which will make it easier for me, — although — well — Kenzingen means home to me."

His voice trembled, and he drew his coat sleeve across his eyes.

Little Sabina had been watching him anxiously, and now taking her mother's hand, she said: "Mamma, must we go away again? I like it here so much."

"I too, my little one; but the dear Lord Jesus sends us forth."

"And will we be poor again, like we were?"

"Yes, and it may be much poorer."

"Mamma, I don't like it at all," and crying, she buried her head in the folds of her mother's dress.

"Sabina, dear," said her mother, "why should you be so troubled over it? Remember how poor our Savior once was, and that He had only hay and straw for His bed."



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The child dried her eyes and said, "That *was* hard, mamma, wasn't it? And I worried my share about it, too, at Christmas time."

"You don't need to worry, you darling; He did it freely, for our sakes, and for yours. But now that it is our turn, we ought to be willing to suffer a little for Him, — but you cannot understand it now, any more than a little birdling in the nest. You'll know better when you are older."

Sadly the child's large eyes looked from one to the other of her elders. Then her cookie occurred to her, and in eating it she found comfort.

Mr. Aschert, however, talked yet a long time with Berthold and the women. They had better get everything ready for leave-taking was his final advice. When he was ready to go, he turned once more to Auntie Salome, and asked: "You have made up your mind, have you, that you will be one with us and acknowledge yourself a follower of the new doctrine?"

"Yes, my good friend; you may count on me."

After the brass-founder had gone, the three sat down together in silence for a little while. Then Berthold, folding his hands as in prayer, repeated the twenty-third Psalm, and with new courage in their hearts they bade each other good night and sought their rest.

Very early the next morning, when it was yet half dark, and while Auntie Salome and her guests were sit-



*"Fear Thou Not, for I am With Thee" (1524).*

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ting at the table eating their simple breakfast of gruel, there arose a commotion in the street. Little Sabina sprang to the window and exclaimed:

"Look, mamma, soldiers! and listen to the drums, and Oh! they're coming in here! What fun! How gay and pretty they look!"

By this time the door had been forced open and three Austrian soldiers stood glaring in on them.

"Widow Salome Berg, you are accused of having to do with heretics, of harboring them and giving them aid."

For an instant fear overcame the one addressed, then recovering herself, she said in a firm tone:

"I myself belong with them."

The soldiers looked at her in astonishment. Then the leader commanded, harshly: "Then prepare yourself. In one hour you must put the gates of the city behind you, you and your fine guests."

A wonderful sense of joy came over the three friends, and all their fears disappeared. Each felt the presence of the Master for whose sake they were about to suffer, and like a note of triumph, fell from Berthold's lips the words: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee."

Only a short respite was allowed the faithful band, but their preparations were soon made, for there was but little they could take with them. Such money and valuables as they possessed they tied up in small bundles, and a few of the most necessary household utensils, to-



gether with bedding and clothing, were loaded on a number of wagons, which carried also the smaller children and the sick. By the time it was fully light the whole company, a hundred and fifty in number, were at the gate, ready to shake the dust of the city from their feet. The soldiers once more came, and amid sport and ridicule, mustered the motley procession, which thereupon began slowly to move.

○ As the march began the grief of many broke over all bounds, and they lifted up their voices and wept. It was not that they repented their fate. They would hold fast to the pure doctrine, but it was so hard to leave their happy homes behind them, and to set their faces toward exile and untold misery. Misery? No, for the decision was unanimous to make their way to Strasburg, where they knew that blessed woman, Catharine Zell, would find for them a refuge.

Mr. Aschert was walking beside Berthold, and when the weeping grew louder, he appealed to him to sing. "Start a hymn," he said; "that will lighten all our sad hearts; let us have —

"'Had God that time not been with us'."

Yes, that was the way to quell the rising clamor of grief, and Berthold Amsteg began, happily:



*"Fear Thou Not, for I am With Thee" (1524).*

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Had God that time not been with us,  
Thus Israel did say,  
Had God that time not been with us,  
We must have felt dismay.  
We were indeed so small a band,  
Beset by foes on every hand,  
By all that host despised.

On us they poured their wicked wrath;  
Had God their will allowed,  
They would have smote us from their path,  
Our necks they would have bowed.  
We might have died as in a flood,  
They might have shed much precious blood,  
Had God forgot His children.

But praise to Him who would not let  
His children meanly perish.  
Like as a bird escaped the net  
Our souls full freedom cherish.  
The bond is broke, and we are free,  
The Lord has giv'n the victory,  
The Lord of earth and heaven! Amen.

One after another joined in the singing, and forthwith their tears were forgotten. Yes, and so should it ever be; the shout of praise, "The bond is broke and we are free," should drown all complaining over the loss of earthly things.

As the company wended their way slowly onward, Berthold dispatched a fleet young messenger ahead, to



notify Catharine Zell to have refuge and entertainment prepared when the pilgrims arrived, which would be in the course of two or three days.

It was at twilight the next evening, and Catharine Zell was sitting in her room resting from her labors. She was about tired out, but the Lord ever gave her renewed strength to serve Him in ministering to the poor, the oppressed and the persecuted. A small fire burned upon the hearth; its glow and warmth comforted her, and she closed her eyes, but not to sleep. Her thoughts wandered over the past, and she mused upon the gracious way in which God had led her, one of His humble handmaids. She saw herself as a little girl in her father's house — he was a carpenter — and remembered how even as a child she had loved the Savior; and she thought of the wonderful way in which her path and that of Matthew Zell had been brought together. She would not boast, but this she could say in that hour, that she had been to him a faithful helpmeet. As a young wife, she had walked in the fear of the Lord, and for His sake, and for the sake of her beloved town of Strasburg, she had taken up the larger ministry of comfort and aid to the needy. Her work of active charity had brought her into touch with many of the most eminent and godly men of her time, and she had become for her day a shining light to all the suffering. And, Ah! how varied was the



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need which those mighty times produced! and not one could she send away without comfort and help. She had as assistants in her work two honorable widows, named Kraft, and the public charity officer, Lux Hackfurt, helped her too, else she never could have attended to everything. While with a thankful heart she was thus meditating upon her life, past and present, there came a knock at the door and one of the Krafts came in.

"What is it, my dear?" asked Mrs. Zell, kindly; "can't I rest a little longer?"

"I wish, indeed, you might, for you need strength. But there is a messenger here from Kenzingen with a letter for you. A case of great need is coming to hand, as I learned by questioning him."

Mrs. Zell went out, and a few moments later she entered her husband's study. He was busily engaged over his books, under the stinging rays of a little lamp. As his wife came in he looked up, and saw she had something to communicate.

"Matthew, a hundred and fifty people, driven out of Kenzingen for the sake of the faith, will reach here tomorrow or the day after, seeking counsel and help."

"My good wife can give to them both," he answered with a loving look, "think you not so?"

"I have many friends, and many a pious soul among them will loose his purse-strings. We ourselves can



shelter perhaps fifty for a little time, and I will at once see to the distribution of the rest. Andrew Berg will open his house, too; he has so much more room than he needs."

"Have you seen him lately?"

"Yes, only to-day. The Lord is with that man, my dear. He finds everywhere grace among men just as he has found it in God's sight, and is in truth a sensible and faithful soul. He stands at the front in bookmaking, his only complaint being that he cannot keep up with his work."

"Who knows how soon help may come to him? Is there anything else, Catharine?"

"No, my dear; pardon me for disturbing you. When those poor people get here I will let you know, and you will receive them with a few suitable words, will you not?"

"Yes, with all my heart; good-bye, my busy and faithful one."

Matthew Zell again leaned over his books, and Catharine went out to make her preparations. Late that same evening she summoned Andrew Berg, and told him that from his native town a hundred and fifty fugitives were coming.

"O, then I shall hear something from home," exclaimed the young man, his eyes sparkling.



"Don't you like it here, Andrew?"

"Very much, but home is home, and I shall never forget dear old Kenzingen and my grandmother. May I ask for some of the guests? You know I have been blessed with a large house."

"Of course, Andrew; I'll send you word as soon as they get here, and you shall come and pick them out. It may be you will find some friends among them."

Andrew sighed. Ah, that one, to whom his heart clung, she who had taken him as an orphan and with a love past expression had cared for and reared him,—she at all events would not be with them.

"Why do you sigh, Andrew? Rejoice rather, and be glad, for it is a great thing thus to forsake home and country for the sake of the Lord Jesus. It seems to me that we may say concerning such a wonder, 'And we beheld His glory,'—for what greater thing could be expected from such poor and dismayed creatures, fleeing the cross, as we all by nature do? Don't worry, Andrew. It is the Master himself who is coming to be our guest, and we will shelter Him."

As Catharine Zell sat the next day with her husband at their frugal meal, she said, happily: "Matthew, everything is prepared; entertainment has been found for all, and the Krafts are busy in the kitchen cooking soup and cutting bread, for I think our guests will soon be here."



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"God grant it, for I believe it is going to snow, and that would make it hard traveling, especially for the children."

At that very moment there was a noise and commotion out in the street, and hurrying to the window the pastor cried, "Catharine, here they are!" He hurried out and opened the door, and in came the tired travelers, cold and hungry.

Catharine went towards them. "Welcome, ye children of my Father's house," was her greeting, every feature expressing good will. "Just come in, all of you, big and little! Ah, little girl, you can hardly stand up any more; sit down on that stool. And you, too, dear old mother, are almost exhausted." She had turned to Auntie Salome, who stood holding little Sabina by the hand.

Then the two Kraft widows came in, bringing steaming soup and great slices of bread, which was eaten with thankful joy. Catharine went about among them like a mother. She would have liked best of all to keep the whole hundred and fifty under her own roof, but that was impossible, and as Andrew Berg just then entered she said to him: "Now, my dear friend, you may select guests for yourself."

He threw a swift glance over the company; then his face grew red, and forcing a path for himself through



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the crowd he stood at his grandmother's side and took the trembling old form in his arms.

"Grandmother, and you too?"

"Yes, I too; a poor exile, but rich in God and rejoicing in His light."

Andrew rejoiced aloud, still holding the dear grandmother in his arms. For now his ardent prayers had been heard, now she had found the true peace, now they were reunited.

"Did you receive my letter, Andrew?"

"No, not yet; nor do I care, now that I have you yourself."

It was some time before Andrew's joy quieted down, but at last he took his dear old grandmother with one hand and little Sabina with the other, while Berthold Amsteg followed with Rosanna.

"Send me more lodgers," he called to Catharine Zell; I must take these home first. This day is salvation come to my house!"

Auntie Salome walked thither as in a dream. True, her old feet were weary, but her heart was as light as that of a young girl in springtime. Andrew had a spacious house, and therefore abundant room for his beloved guests, who soon felt themselves at home under his roof.

Employment was soon found, too, for Berthold. He worked with Andrew in the book-bindery, and assisted



Mrs. Catharine Zell in her labor of love, — for as long as she lived she proved herself a mother to all the forsaken and wretched and far and near was she known as a brave, undaunted heroine in Christ Jesus her Lord. With Andrew Berg and his family, to which also Berthold Amsteg, Rosanna and little Sabine belonged, she and her husband continued ever in firm friendship, and it was to her a means of new strength, when her joy might have faltered or her work like a flood threatened to overwhelm her, to have Berthold Amsteg in his sonorous tones repeat to her his best text:

“Fear thou not, for I am with thee!”





## **“Love Never Filleth.”**

**( 1552 )**

It was the year 1552.

A vast, blue sky stretched over the city of Delft, in Holland. Blithe greetings passed from one to another on the streets, where all was life and motion; for it was Sunday, and those who could, shook off the dust of week-day toil and hastened away for a holiday.

On one of the canals which traverse the city was situated a large, stately mansion, and if a stranger had inquired who lived there, every Delft child would have been able to answer: “Mynheer Graswinkel.”

On this Sunday the above-named gentleman was standing by the window with his sixteen-year-old son, and both were looking out in silence. At last the father said: “Give up the boat ride, James, for your mother’s sake and mine.”

“O, father, I have been looking forward to it the whole week!”

“Nevertheless, I wish you to forego it.”

The boy’s pale face showed gloom and disappointment; he pressed his lips together and was silent. At this moment the mother entered. She looked at her son anxiously, drew near to him, put her arm around his



neck and said, affectionately: "James Jansz, do not go into a boat to-day!"

"Mother, have you suddenly become superstitious?"

"No, not superstitious, but a voice within tells me that you ought not go. I have thought it over seriously and prayerfully, and know that it comes from the Lord. He wishes to warn you in this way."

A half mocking, half embarrassed smile appeared on the youth's countenance, then he answered somewhat sullenly:

"I am no child any more, that for such trifling reasons you may deny me a pleasure that I have once been promised."

Their parents looked at their son in surprise, then the father said: "James, you are our only child, and to-day I perceive that our love for you has not been strong enough to lead us to bring you up with proper strictness. Mother, we have spared the rod too much."

Mynheer Graswinkel had never before spoken to his son in so severe a tone, and as the latter was well disposed and devoted to his parents, he was sorry when he saw how much he had grieved them. Following his better inclination, he embraced his mother and exclaimed:

"Forgive me, I did not mean to grieve you. It was only disagreeable to me to have to tell my friends, whom I had asked to make this excursion, that I was not com-



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ing. For really, mother, I cannot tell them your reasons; they would laugh at them."

His mother was about to reply, but at that moment voices were heard outside and with the swift blood surging to his face the son implored:

"Please, please let me go, only today. I cannot let them go without me."

Just then two of his friends entered, crying joyfully: "James, the finest weather in the world! Just as if made for our boat ride! Come quickly, the others have gone ahead slowly and are expecting us."

"May I?" whispered the boy with beseeching look.

With heavy hearts his parents gave their consent.

For a long time they stood at the window watching him as he hurried away. James waved his hand to them once more, and was then lost to view. With a sigh Mynheer Graswinkel turned to his wife.

"There must be a change, we shall have to retrieve what we have neglected."

"He is such a good boy, and on the whole there is only one thing lacking in him, he is still distant from his Lord and Savior."

The father nodded silently and the mother continued:

"We must pray for him more zealously; we will commend our beloved and only child to Him more fervently than ever."



While the parents were thus engaged in earnest conversation, James Jansz hastened with his friends toward the little Schie river. On the way one of them asked him: "By the way, you don't object to John Blooker's taking his cousin with us, do you?"

A flash of joy passed over James' face, but he forced himself to reply, indifferently: "No, why should I?"

John Blooker, the son of Mynheer Graswinkel's neighbor, was his friend. John's young fourteen-year-old cousin Gerda, who was an orphan, had lived from infancy in the Blooker home, and John as well as James loved her dearly. Without knowing it, she exerted a great influence over both of them, her gentle manner softening their vehemence, and her words often giving a decision in their differences of opinion.

When the three young people arrived at the river, John and Gerda were already sitting in the skiff with another friend. They sprang in with them, and soon the boat was gliding away in the sunlight.

"Do you like it, Gerda?" asked James. The girl had her hand in the water and was enjoying the little furrow it was making. Her cheeks were rosy with pleasure and her blue eyes were beaming. At James' question she merely nodded, but he seized her thick blonde braids and said, laughingly: "I shall hold you to keep you from falling into the water."



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Joking and chatting they sailed along; every thought of his mother's anxiety had vanished from James' heart,—he was enjoying the present moment. The time passed rapidly with the merry crowd, and it was almost with dismay that they looked toward the west when one of them remarked that the sun was setting and that they would have to turn back. The evening breeze was blowing cool over the water, and they turned the boat towards shore. Before they had reached the bank, however, a sudden and awkward stroke of the oars set the boat to rocking. Gerda screamed. All saw the danger, but in their efforts to avert it they only increased their peril. At last the boat went over and for an instant its occupants disappeared into the water. There was no help near, but the little stream was not so deep at that point but that they all might save themselves. John carried Gerda, and they soon had the firm ground under their feet. In consternation they looked at each other, then a horror stricken cry came from Gerda's lips.

"James Jansz is not here! Where is James? O, he is drowned!" and crying she covered her face with her hands.

The friends looked on all sides, not a soul was visible; they called anxiously, no one answered. They were about to give up in despair, but Gerda implored: "John, try one thing more, see if he is not under the overturned boat."



"That is impossible," replied John, "wholly impossible!"

"Please, please try it!"

"But Gerda, if he were there, he would have been dead long ago; it is really trouble in vain." ¶

"Nevertheless, John, I cannot leave until you have looked." Again it was the pleading look in the large blue eyes that forced the youth to comply with the girl's wish, and at his instigation the friends prepared themselves to wade into the water. After much exertion they succeeded in turning the boat over and their joy may be imagined when they found James Jansz still alive underneath. With cries of rejoicing they brought him to the shore, but he was very pale and silent. Gerda had seized his right hand and spoke of the anxiety they had suffered on his account, and how glad she was that he was still alive; he, however, seemed lost in thought and answered only in monosyllables.

"Are you ill, James Jansz?" she asked him at last, greatly troubled.

"No, Gerda, but I was at death's door and it has affected me deeply."

The maiden shrank back with fear: "O James if you were no longer with us!" Their eyes met, the one pair expressing love and solicitude, the other great seriousness. The young people hastened to the city to change their wet clothes. John and Gerda stopped a moment



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at the Graswinkel door, looking at their friend as he mounted the stone steps without giving a backward glance, then John said, shaking his head: "What can be the matter with him? I have never seen him like that before." They then entered the Blooker home where they were received with joy, for there had been much concern felt for their safety.

James Jansz in the meantime had entered the little room which his mother was wont to occupy when she was alone. Usually the spinning-wheel was humming, but to-day being Sunday, she was seated on her low, cane-bottomed chair resting from her labors.

"James!" cried she in frightened tones, when he appeared pale and drenched at the door.

"Mother, I have been in the jaws of death! God showed me eternity, I saw it close before me. But with terrible clearness He showed me too, that it was high time to turn aside from my evil ways and from henceforth you will find me a different son."

The mother had sprung up and was holding her child in her arms. "Praise be to God who saved you! I prayed for you the whole time. I knew that you were in danger. But now you must change your clothes and afterwards you can tell me what happened."

A little later mother and son were sitting together, the latter strengthened and warm but still wearing on his pale features an expression of deep seriousness. When



at an early hour he had gone to rest, Frau Graswinkel remained up alone until her husband came home, whom she then told all.

"The Savior has found him," she said in conclusion, "let us thank Him!"

The next morning James Jansz appeared before his parents bright and well, but within he had become another person. The same seriousness as on the previous day lay on his countenance, nor did it disappear again.

In the evening when he was sitting with his beloved mother in her little room, the moonlight falling through the round window-panes, he leaned his head against her shoulder and said: "Mother, yesterday a barrier arose between my past life and the life which I am now going to begin."

Frau Graswinkel pressed her son's hand in silence and the latter hesitatingly continued: "Mother, it is frightful when the terrors of eternity surround one. What would have become of me, if I had gone hence? God snatched me as a brand from the fire, and my life shall be henceforth consecrated to Him."

"Think over the matter earnestly," replied his mother; "it is not so easy a thing to consecrate one's life to God."

"I know it, but I know too, that nothing else can henceforth bring me peace."



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"Then may the Almighty bless your decision," said Frau Graswinkel solemnly as she kissed her son's forehead; she well knew what such a resolution meant with him.

His father set him a time of probation in which he was to examine himself as to whether he would change his mind, or would abide by his resolution courageously to renounce the joys of this world; but at the end he remained firm. His friend John, too, implored him not to turn away from him; but he bravely resisted his pleadings. Gerda sat beside him in the little garden and begged him: "Do not leave me, James! Indeed, indeed, I cannot bear it!" He took her hand and without hesitation replied: "It must be, Gerda; it is the only way for me to find peace. I shall remain your friend, ready to help and advise you as long as I live." His voice trembled a little, but for the Lord's sake he was able to endure giving her up also, this maiden, who, as he now realized, had become very dear to him.

And so his parents no longer opposed his wish. They vacated a little apartment for him in the rear of their house, where he was to live alone. In this he had nothing but a chair and a stool. The former served him as a place of rest at night and the latter he offered to his visitors. He ate nothing but dry bread and cheese and drank nothing but milk. The first time that his mother surprised him at this meal, tears came to her eyes and



she exclaimed: "O my son, how different did I once think that your life would be!"

"Mother, only after the manner of the world," he answered. "For my soul you cannot have imagined a greater satisfaction. I am quite happy and contented; ask the people out yonder if any of them can say the same of themselves."

James Jansz took pains to learn all he could about medicine, and he planted his little garden-plot with healing herbs; only in one corner stood a low bench, where he often sat either alone or with a friend, meditating or talking about heavenly things.

Years passed, but no change occurred in James Jansz Graswinkel's life, and in Delft they had gradually grown accustomed to see "the wonderful man" walking through the streets. Not in the day time but when the dusk of the evening came, he visited the poor and sick in the city. His income, which was quite large, he spent in alleviating the sufferings of others. The poor were his friends, his children and his lambs as he called them. But whosoever beside asked comfort and encouragement from him, found both, for, he was continually drawing from the rich and inexhaustible source of God's Word.

Gerda often sat in his bare little room or beside him on the narrow bench. He still loved her, but only for her gentle and open soul; he had long ago conquered the



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pain which her blue eyes had caused him. He had become her guide to heaven, and she relied on him with unbounded faith.

Gerda's twenty-first birthday had come. James Jansz had remembered her particularly in his prayers. Toward evening she came to him in his unadorned room and sat down on the stool beside him. The window was open and the balmy air of spring blew in softly, the sparrows twittered on the roof and in the little garden the young green was sprouting.

"James," she began, after she had been silent for some time, "I must tell you something." Her listener looked at her searchingly; she blushed deeply and with down-cast eyes she whispered: "John asked me for my hand to-day — advise me, shall I say yes?"

For a moment a shadow appeared on James' face, then he asked with a firm voice: "Gerda, will he walk with you on the road to heaven? Will he help you to keep steadfast?"

"You know him, he has a good heart," answered the maiden, hesitatingly.

"Yes a good heart — and a light mind."

"Perhaps I should be a help to him."

"Do not give him your hand depending on that," said James Jansz very earnestly. "It is not for the wife to be a prop for her husband, but he for her. I have seen and experienced it a hundred times that the wife's



influence is not great enough to alter the husband's way of thinking, and then the indissoluble bonds of matrimony become heavy fetters."

Gerda had become very pale; she sat before her friend with folded hands, when suddenly he asked: "Do you love him?"

His eyes were fixed penetratingly upon the maiden's lovely face. She met his look frankly and answered: "James Jansz, his parents have heaped benefits upon me from my youth up, and he has been my good comrade as long as I can remember. You know, I am quite alone in the world, and — yes — I love him with my whole heart."

She said the last with faltering voice; but her friend could not acquiesce gladly as she had perhaps expected, he rose without a word, fetched his New Testament and opened it at the first epistle to the Corinthians.

"Read!"

It was the 13th chapter, and he pointed to the words: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not," and so on, until he read with a loud voice: "It beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Then he closed the book and both remained silent a long time, until Gerda arose, saying: "Ah, James Jansz, I often think I should like to live as you do. Nothing can disturb you, and you are earning your heavenly reward."



"Gerda," he interrupted her quickly, "how little you understand my life! How can we sinners who cannot pay our own debts, deserve heaven? I have learned to make my lament to God with David: 'Lord, who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults!' But I believe that Christ's deserts are my deserts, and I hope to reach heaven through Him, who is the way, the truth and the life."\*

Full of veneration, the maiden looked up at her friend; yes, he had overcome the world, but she still loved it with its joys and promises.

"Farewell," said she, holding out her hand to him.

"God bless you!" he replied, "and Gerda, you will examine yourself and your heart thoroughly, will you not promise me this?"

"I promise, to-morrow you shall hear from me."

The door closed behind the maiden; James Jansz' eyes followed her. O, would that he could obtain for her the happiness in life that she hoped for! no sacrifice would be too great for him. He stood there a long time lost in thought, then noticing that it had grown dusk, he made himself ready for his walk through the city, — his poor, his sick and abandoned were waiting for him. And yet his thoughts were not wholly taken up with them this evening, for Gerda's image forced itself again

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\* His own words.



and again to the foreground. What would she do? Would she seek to know God's will above all else?

When James Jansz Graswinkel returned late at night from his labor of love, the windows in neighbor Blooker's house were brilliantly illuminated, but in his home only one window was bright, and there his dear mother sat praying for him. Now this light, too, was extinguished, and he went into his bare little room, praising God who had given him peace in the midst of the turmoil of the world.

On the next morning James Jansz had been up a long time and was standing by the open window enjoying the beauty of the springtime and the morning, when an arm was thrown about his neck and the clear eyes of his mother, who had long been a widow, looked lovingly into his.

"Good morning, mother!"

"Good morning, my son! I have something to tell you."

"About Gerda?"

"Yes."

"Tell me, please."

"Gerda is engaged to John Blooker."

Frau Graswinkel's eyes were fixed with anxious attention on her son's face. He, however, returned her look steadfastly. "Mother, I know what you are think-



*"Love Never Faileth" (1552).*

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ing. I gave up everything for Christ's sake, it is only thus that I can fully serve him with the brethren."

"But others — — —!"

"Yes, others can do otherwise," interrupted he, "but I cannot, mother! I am happy in renunciation and in the friendship of my Master."

Frau Graswinkel gazed upon her son's noble, beaming countenance. Yes, he was free from the world and its joys, it did not grieve him that others enjoyed them. She went away pacified, but he remained a long time standing by the window, not seeing the sunlight which grew brighter and brighter in the dewy garden, nor hearing the twitter of the birds; but before his mental vision appeared the face of a young and beautiful girl, and his soul wrestled with God that He might attend this friend of his youth on the storm-swept path of life. When Gerda came to see him in the evening, he met her with calm friendliness. She was very grave and as she sat down upon the stool she asked, not without some embarrassment: "James Jansz, do you know all?"

"Yes, Gerda, may you never repent of your step."

She wanted to say more, but her friend's reserved manner caused her to be silent. He then spoke of his poor, and only when he rose to make his rounds, did she find courage to say: "James, to-morrow evening we are going to celebrate our engagement; you will come, won't



you? John and his parents send you a pressing invitation."

"No, Gerda!" he replied, "you know that I do not go into company; but if you want to show me some affection, send some of your good things to my poor."

"We will do that anyway; please, James, do come."

"No, don't ask me, you cannot persuade me. And now help me to fasten the bottles and flasks in this strap, or I shall not be able to carry them all. O, child, you do not know how blessed it is to help the poor and sick, to comfort the sorrowing, to set right those who have gone astray. I would not exchange my life with any one."

Involuntarily Gerda glanced around the meager little room. In one corner lay the few books which James Jansz Graswinkel possessed; beside them lay everything that was needed in distilling, for he had learned to do this in order to prepare more strengthening medicines. On the walls hung bunches of herbs. James interrupted her observations.

"I must go. Gerda, farewell! and — to-morrow — do not forget my poor!"

The girl gave him her hand, a deep blush suffused her countenance, and she whispered: "James Jansz, will you think of me in your prayers?"

"I have always included you in my prayers and shall continue to do so. God keep you!" He strode out hastily into the fading twilight.



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Gerda remained in the little room a long time meditating. What was it that made James Jansz so great? Was it his scorn of his own wealth? his renunciation of all comforts and pleasures? his great poverty? his learning? his giving aid to great and small, whatever their need? The girl shook her head. Then her eyes fell upon his Bible, and she remembered what he had read to her from the first epistle to the Corinthians. Yes, she knew now, it was love, the unselfish, warm-hearted love which made him like a saint, and rising she whispered: "Love never faileth."

Four years had passed since that day. John Blooker's parents had died and had not left him as great a fortune as he had expected, and he was no longer able to continue in the style in which he had lived heretofore. It was very hard for him to deny himself this and that. His parents had always allowed him to have everything he wished, he was spoiled with pleasure-seeking. Gerda had often remonstrated with him, saying they must retrench; she saw that they would not be able to go on in this way, but it was in vain. She often sat on the stool beside James Jansz. Alas! he saw indeed how thin her cheeks were getting and that her eyes no longer beamed, but he could not help her; he could only point out to her again and again the great love of the Good Shepherd whose heart is open to every one. A ray of sunshine had



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come into the young wife's soul and life when her little son was born.

"He shall be called James Jansz," said she to her husband, and he consented. The friend became the child's godfather and was peculiarly devoted to him.

On a mild spring evening, just as James Graswinkel was getting ready to go out on his errand of mercy, for there were many who were waiting for him, John Blooker came in and said: "James, come over to our house; the child is sick."

His friend looked at him earnestly and asked: "Very sick?"

"I do not know; the women are always over anxious. Gerda wants you to come."

"John," said James solemnly, "I fear it is not well with your love for your wife."

"Why not? Has she been complaining to you?"

"Never, but do you think that one does not see when the heart is warm or cold? Meet her with love."

"I tell you, she has only love for her child, but none for me."

"John!" exclaimed his friend reproachfully, but the other turned to go, only asking him once more: "Come to Gerda quickly, she is expecting you," and then he went away.

James Jansz took some medicines and walked out toward the Blooker residence.



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For those times it was furnished elegantly and fashionably; nothing was spared that could enhance its comfort and splendor. James Jansz mounted the stairway and opened the door into a high-ceiled room; it was empty. He went on, and there at the end of the suite of rooms stood the wooden cradle, and beside it sat Frau Gerda with her head against the high carved back of a chair, fast asleep. Care and sorrow were written on her pale face, and yet it was the same which James Jansz had loved in his youth. He gazed at it a long time. O, he had helped so many people, could he not do so here too? He shook his head; love overcomes everything, but when it has fled there can be no help. O, God, had it ever been of the true sort.

The little invalid now stirred and immediately the mother started up with fear; then noticing her friend, she hastened toward him crying in beseeching tones: "James Jansz, my child will die if you do not help him!"

"There is only one Helper," he answered, "have you forgotten the great Master in Israel?"

The young wife lowered her eyes, but he continued: "We can do nothing by our weak might."

"Try it, James!" implored Gerda. "I shall have to despair if God takes my boy, I have nothing left but him." With a groan she put her hands before her face.

"Do not fall into sin, Gerda," said her friend mildly; "but now, let me see the child, it is awake." He made



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a thorough examination of the sick boy held his feverish hand and listened to his heavy breathing. It was a long time before he turned to the anxiously waiting mother: "The little boy is very sick, but God can help him." He gave him some medicine, whereupon he grew quieter. Then he sat down beside the cradle and said: "Gerda, go to bed; I shall stay with my patient all night."

But she shook her head: "Not for the world, James; I shall watch with you."

Her friend knew that all opposition would be of no avail and allowed her to have her way. They sat together in silence for a long time, the evening shadows falling over wood and plain. Upon a table in the corner a wax candle burned, throwing its flickering light upon the child's face on which the two were fixedly gazing. It was long after midnight when noisy steps were heard outside.

"It is John," said Gerda, when she saw that her friend was listening.

"So late? Where has he been?"

"I don't know, perhaps in the society of his friends, who have led him astray. James Jansz, John is a gambler and what is more — he plays with false dice!"

"Gerda!"

"I tell you," continued the young wife, "because I can no longer bear my grief. O, James, what have I



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done to deserve such misery?" She had spoken in a whisper and with great excitement. With loving touch her friend placed his hand on hers and asked: "Have you not to reproach yourself? Has your love always been long-suffering and patient?"

"My love is long since dead," interrupted Gerda, "and I should like nothing better than to be freed from the fetters which bind me to John."

"And your child? Should he grow up without a father?"

"My love would compensate him for everything."

"Your love? What did you once tell me concerning it? Was not your love for your husband —?"

"Yes, yes, I was foolish enough to think so, I have been terribly disappointed."

"Gerda, pray to God. You have turned away from Him and therefore you cannot remain steadfast in suffering."

"Yes, I will begin a new life when I am rid of my husband."

Her friend's eyes turned to her with sadness, but she slipped down on the floor beside her child's cradle, lifted her hands toward him and implored: "James Jansz, help me to be free!"

"No, Gerda, not so! You must not throw all the blame upon your frivolous husband, but examine yourself and see wherein you yourself have failed."



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"And you repulse me, who beg you for help?"

"No, but it is help that I am going to give you, when I say, Endure? Perhaps it is not yet too late to regain your husband's heart; try it, and may the Almighty bless and help you. I shall pray for you and not grow weary."

Gerda wept silently. She well knew in this hour, how much she had erred and that a great part of the blame was hers. If her love had been long-suffering, perhaps John would not have turned from her. O, how soon she had ceased to hope all things, to believe all things, to endure all things! Was it too late to make an attempt to win his love again? The young wife struggled with herself a long time. When the morning dawned and James Jansz rose to go, she gave him her hand and whispered:

"I will try to do what God wishes."

"Then He will help you," answered her friend, "He will help you and give you peace."

The little boy recovered slowly, and in the long anxious days and nights which Gerda spent by the sick-bed the love of her friend in its unrelenting firmness became clear to her. In all things he first asked what was the Lord's will; He was a guide for him even in the darkest valley. But this questioning gave him likewise the deep and holy peace which made his life such a happy one.



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When Gerda sat again on the stool in his little room, holding her little son on her lap, she besought him: "Tell me more of the divine love, that my earthly love may again be founded on it. I know that the Master alone can teach true love and true fidelity."

"Yes, Gerda, it is so, and you will be happy if you hold fast to this," answered her friend with emotion; "what I can do to help you, I will do."

From this time on a more ardent bond of friendship existed between Gerda and James Jansz, and a little of the peacefulness of the humbler man flowed into her soul.

They were not glad summer days that Gerda spent, they were more filled with struggle than ever, but her soul had gone silently to God and He helped her. This had taken place slowly, as the fruit ripens; alas, soon she was to be tried in a more difficult school!

Autumn had come. In the streets of Delft it was rainy and stormy, yet all the brighter by contrast was Gerda's chamber. She had just put her boy to bed and was sitting lost in thought before the bright chimney fire. Her face was as pale as formerly, but it no longer wore an expression of bitterness and unrest, but of humble resignation. The door was thrown open and her husband entered. She looked at him with surprise, but he drew up an armchair beside her and said roughly: "Gerda, something dreadful has happened."



Terrified the young wife drew herself up: "John, what is it?"

"We are beggars; the downfall of our house can no longer be delayed."

Gerda uttered a cry and covered her face with her hands, but her husband continued with unnatural calmness. "When everything is settled, I shall go to Antwerp. I cannot be poor here. I will not have the finger of scorn pointed at me. I will give you the choice of sharing my lot or of staying here with the child. James Jansz will doubtless give you enough—"

"I shall never beg," broke in Gerda bitterly. "I am young and strong, I shall be able to earn my own bread. But you—you?"

"Don't trouble yourself about me, everybody has but one life, and if it gets too hard—"

"John!"

"Think over the matter until to-morrow; as I said, I will set you free."

Nevertheless there was a slight trembling in his voice, which he wished to make seem careless. Gerda was about to give him her hand; but she hesitated; the words, "Love hopeth all things, endureth all things" did not come into her mind quick enough. When she looked up, her husband had gone out. She sat down by the fire again, filled with anguish but shedding no tears. The things that surrounded her no longer belonged to



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her, but to the deceived creditors of her frivolous husband; she scarcely comprehended the greatness of the calamity. Alas, was there light in this darkness? Was there help in this need?

James Jansz, — yes, she would go to him. She put on her cloak and went out.

When she entered his room, he cried out in dismay: "Gerda!"

But she threw off her shielding garment, sank down upon the stool, and with sobbing voice exclaimed: "James, it is all over."

"I knew that it would come some day," he replied sadly.

"John has given me the choice of going with him or of staying here with the child; he is going to Antwerp."

"And you?"

"I shudder at the thought of going with him."

"Nevertheless, Gerda, it is the path of duty."

"James Jansz!"

"I can say nothing else for your own sake."

"O, James, I thought I had been made strong, that my love had grown to be a little like that which the apostle Paul demands, but now I see that I was mistaken."

"You would have continued to live with John if he had remained rich, wouldn't you?"



Gerda did not answer, but wept softly. Her friend paced the narrow room in deep thought, then stopped at last before the young woman, and said: "Gerda, let John go and look for work; I will help him, I have friends in Antwerp. If he succeeds, you can follow him; until then, move into the rooms of my deceased mother, they have been empty since she died."

The decision had evidently cost him pain, but he did what he considered right. With mild and compassionate looks he regarded his sorrowing friend, warmly pressing the small slender hand which she extended to him in gratitude.

"I will speak to John," he continued, "and, Gerda, it is your firm resolve to follow him, is it not?"

For a moment she hesitated, a deep flush covered her face which up to this moment had been so pale, sobs came from her lips, then she answered with unsteady voice: "Yes, I will —!"

Ruin soon stared them in the face. The house of Blooker had scarcely suspended payment, when demands were made on it from every side. The lamenting creditors feared to lose their money, but justice was done to all. James Graswinkel worked untiringly together with another trusty man, and they found the condition of affairs such that it was a source of wonder that the collapse had not taken place sooner. John had managed his business so unscrupulously, it seemed he must



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have been blind. This much at least the faithful, self-sacrificing man wished to do for Gerda, the friend and beloved of his youth, namely, save the name of Blooker from disgrace, that his godson need not blush when he told his name.

At last everything was settled up, the house was sold, the creditors satisfied, and John in Antwerp. Gerda lived in retirement with her little son in Frau Graswinkel's rooms. A great chasm had opened in her life, and her soul was too weary to hope that a change for the better might some day come again. However, since all earthly things to which she had held, had passed away, she clung, like a drowning person to the saving plank, and this was God Himself, whom James Jansz brought near to her. Now, in her deepest need and abandonment, she learned to know Him truly, Him who seeks those who go astray and follows the lost sheep into the wilderness. They were serious but blessed hours, which she passed sitting beside her friend. She fully recognized the Lord as her Savior, and His love filled and expanded her heart, so that she could understand, "Love hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." Then she often said: "James Jansz, I wish that John would send for me, I can do all things now, through Him who strengtheneth me."

But John Blooker did not send for his wife. At first he was in earnest in wishing to gain a livelihood and



to begin a new life with his family, but he soon fell again into frivolous company. The gaming-devil seized him anew, and all was over with his good intentions. The business house which he had entered had patience with him for a long time; but when the new year began he was dismissed. He quickly went from bad to worse; and allowing himself to fall into debt through dishonest methods, in order to escape punishment he was obliged secretly to leave the city.

Thus the spring crept on, with sunshine and rain, with storms and cold nights.

It was a dark evening toward the end of March. Light frost lay over the earth, and James Jansz folded his cloak closely around him when he went out to begin his customary ministrations. He hurried through streets and lanes which became more and more deserted. He was not afraid; he had only one thought, the needs of his fellow men.

He had not noticed that someone was following him; suddenly a man tore off his cloak and ran away. James Jansz hurried after him, seized his hand and said heartily: "My friend, if you are doing this on account of poverty, come with me; I will give you the cloak and money besides."

At the sound of his voice the thief stopped as if rooted to the spot. From an adjacent window fell a



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narrow streak of light and when James Jansz looked more closely, he cried out in affright, "John Blooker!"

The man made no answer, and James grasping his hand more firmly said: "Alas, has it come to this?"

"Yes, to this," ejaculated John bitterly; "James, let me go. An honest man and a thief do not suit together."

But the great, patient philanthropist did not release his hand but said: "Come home with me and we will finish our talk."

In silence they walked through the city. As they passed along the canal, John suddenly asked: "Where is Gerda?"

"In my mother's house."

"Will you take me to her?"

"Yes!"

Never!" screamed John, and tore loose from his friend. An instant later the waters of the canal closed over the unhappy man's head.

James Jansz hurried into the next house and begged for help. Every one thought it was an accident, and soon the place which had but a moment before been so dark, was bright with the red light of torches. They called, and some untied a boat; nothing was to be seen. Then — was there not a movement in the water yonder? A hand emerged from it as if to grasp something.

James Jansz was one of those in the boat. Without hesitation he sprang into the water, and after a short



time appeared again on the surface with his burden. The boat took both of them in and soon both were in safety. John Blooker was unconscious. James Jansz hastened ahead to inform Gerda; his first thought was to save her anxiety and fright. Then he changed his clothes. When he went again into the front part of the house, some men were carrying in the still unconscious man. Gerda went to meet them, pale as death, but wearing on her countenance a holy peace and a divine loftiness of expression that filled James Jansz' soul with unspeakable joy and fervent thanksgiving.

She calmly ordered everything, and soon her husband was gently put to bed. She seated herself beside him and looked at his motionless features. "O, God, do not let him pass away thus!" prayed she.

Her friend did his utmost for him, but it seemed as if all were in vain. At last, long after midnight, life slowly returned; and with fast flowing tears the young wife knelt at the bedside of her miserable husband, praying that the Lord might not impute to him the sin which he had committed.

Anxious, weary weeks followed that evening. For a time James Jansz had hope that the Almighty would bless his skill for the sick man, but later he realized that the end would soon come, and from that time he had but one aim in view, that he might save the soul of



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his friend. Gerda was untiring in her ministration to the invalid. One morning as she sat beside him, he put out his hand to her, saying in deep contrition: "Gerda, how can you wait on me so, on me who have so failed toward you, more than I can express?"

Then a sweet, soft light came into her eyes and she answered: "I have rightly learned what these words mean: Love hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things."

The tears coursed slowly down the sunken cheeks of the sick man, and he whispered: "Alas, how shall I pass before the eternal Judge?"

"John, He Himself is Love. By His grace I have forgiven you; and He will forgive you, because He has a heart of compassion towards every sinner."

"Gerda, do you think that I am going to die soon?"

For a moment the wife hesitated; the anxiety in the deep-set eyes of her sick husband pierced her heart. But she answered firmly, "Yes, John."

A painful groan escaped his lips. To be sure he had sought death lightly and in unbelief, but now the greatness of his sin had been revealed to him, and he believed in eternity and a King of righteousness.

James Jansz entered, and the sick man cried out almost in despair: "James, my sin is too great to be forgiven!"



"God is greater than your sin," rejoined his friend; "He can and will forgive you if you truly repent."

Gerda left the room; the two men continued talking a long time of sin and guilt, of mercy and grace, and when James Jansz left his friend, his pale lips whispered:

"God be merciful to me a sinner!"

One month after John Blooker had been carried into the Granswinkel mansion, he was carried out again. He had died believing in his Savior; day and night James Jansz and Gerda had manifested to him in their lives the love which is of God and leads to God. Men had forgiven him, and the Lord too had wiped away his sin, although it had been as scarlet, and he went without fear through the dark valley of death, hoping for the great mercy which would give him a place, even though it might be the humblest, at the heavenly table.

His young wife remained a widow all her life, and with the help of her friend brought up her son strictly yet lovingly. She lived in the Graswinkel home and served the Lord in helping James Jansz with his poor and wretched. She waited with longing for the Lord to deliver her from the imperfection and struggle of this lower life, but patiently endured, and for many a year often sat on the stool in her friend's bare little room while they talked together of God and of His love and mercy. She became more and more estranged from the world,



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and with joyful heart at last she greeted the summons of her Savior, when after a short illness He took her home, just as her noble son had established his own fireside.

Time passed until the year 1623.

In the little unadorned room, where James Jansz Graswinkel had lived for seventy years, stood his plain coffin. There was great mourning and lamentation in the city of Delft; the poor and wretched had lost their loving father and benefactor. And they all came wishing to see him once more. There he lay in his plain dress, on his lips was a sweet and happy smile, and on his broad white brow lay a heavenly peace. When evening came there entered a man who might have been in his sixtieth year. He lit the wax candles and kept the night-watch; it was James Jansz Blooker. With inexpressible love he looked at the dead, then seated himself in the old chair which throughout his life had been the deceased's only luxury, and took up his Bible. Ah, he knew every leaf of it; his mother's friend had been his friend also, as long as he could remember! When the morning dawned he was reading the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and on the margin was written: "Gerda."

He knew what it signified, and closed the book, whispering: "Love believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth!"



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James Jansz Graswinkel is unforgotten. As long as the Evangelical Church stands, he will be spoken of as one of her ascetics. And some day the Lord our God will in tones of love say to him up yonder, "Thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"\*

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\* Sources: "Lives of Pious Men of All Conditions in Ancient and Modern Times." By Johannes Hübner.





## **“Enduring Unto the End.”**

**(1558)**

It was the year of grace 1558.

In a large room of his stately mansion, situated in the very heart of Paris, the noted jurist and senator Anne du Bourg was sitting before the brightly blazing chimney. The fire not only dispelled the chill of the November day, but also illumined the room. This was simply but elegantly furnished. On the walls hung the pictures of his ancestors. His family originated in Auvergne and he was of noble birth. Over the fireplace stood a plain white marble cross. Musingly the master's eyes rested upon it, and he devoutly folded his hands as his thoughts turned to the cross of Golgotha and to Him who loved us even unto death. Alas, that so bitter a quarrel had been kindled on account of this Prince of Peace, and on account of His Word, which preached only love! Alas, that so much fleshly zeal had been mingled with the holy cause, and that here too the blood of martyrs had to cry out to heaven! Anne du Bourg passed his hand through his thick dark hair, which had of late begun to be threaded with silver, although he was but thirty-seven years old; then he inclined his head to one side, listening. Without in the corridor a voice



was heard, and soon thereafter his old servant Henry entered.

The senator expected that he would announce what he wanted, but as he remained standing in silence at the door, he looked up at him with surprise and interrogation.

The flames from the fireplace lit up the face of the old servant, on which deep excitement was portrayed; and when Anne du Bourg sprang up in affright, exclaiming, "What has happened, Henry?" the faithful man answered with trembling voice, "A price has been put upon Victor Roger's head; they are seeking him everywhere."

The senator sank back into his arm chair; then, eager to learn the particulars, motioned his servant to him. The latter obeyed, and in a half-whisper related the following:

"I wished to make some purchases and was walking through the streets; as I turned a corner an excited throng came toward me, and a wild-looking man cried out: 'Did you not see a man running away? perhaps you know him, it is Victor Roger?'"

"'Victor Roger?' I asked with surprise.

"'Yes, the very man,' he answered; 'he has been making very offensive assertions concerning the honor and power of the Church, and has been speaking of upheavals in Germany through the great revolutionist,



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what is it they call him — Luther — or Calvin — or some such name.' The man said more of the like while the rude multitude rushed along; it apparently pleased him to communicate the news to some one who as yet knew nothing of the matter."

"But," exclaimed the senator, "how did all this happen? I cannot understand it."

"Victor is fiery and independent; he spoke of his convictions in the circle, as he thought, of his faithful friends, setting the German reformer up as a model and praising him. But one among them was false and betrayed him, and soon and unexpectedly the executioners came and arrested him. He submissively allowed himself to be led away, but took advantage of the first opportunity to make his escape. In the chase which followed more and more persons had joined themselves, many of them scarcely knowing what it was all about."

With a sorrowful countenance the old servant ceased speaking, but the senator covered his face with his hands and groaned: "Victor, Victor!" Then he raised his eyes to Henry who had remained standing beside him and said: "He is lost!"

"God will help him out and save him!"

Anne du Bourg rose, laid his hand on the old man's and said with emotion: "Save? My friend, the time will soon come, when the individual will not look for salvation, but when he will have only one prayer in



his heart and on his lips, that he may endure unto the end."

The faithful man looked anxiously at his master and asked timidly, "And you?"

"If the Lord demands it, I shall confess my faith."

"Spare yourself!" begged Henry.

"Did the Lord spare Himself? Old friend, you should be glad to serve a courageous master."

With streaming eyes the old man kissed the senator's hand and left the room. But Anne du Bourg sat down in his chair, stirred the fire to a brighter glow and gazed into it in deep thought.

Victor had been his friend as long as he could remember, and not only had heartfelt love united them, but for some years the realization which they shared in common, that the Catholic Church was not the right one, but that God through His instrument had created another, had been an additional bond between them.

The two friends zealously examined the doctrines of the reform movement, and soon they praised God for His great works among the elect. To be sure they were not unaware that they were exposing themselves to great and constant danger, for everywhere in France they heard of the murder and funeral piles of the believers; but they also knew that they did not stand alone, but that congregations had been formed here and there, and that the number of courageous followers was greater than



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the enemy imagined. How happy the two friends had been in their search for the real truth!

The senator's thoughts were interrupted by a quiet, careful opening and closing of the door, and he heard the key turned in the key-hole. He looked up with surprise and rose with a start, for a tall figure enveloped in a cloak strode toward him throwing off his covering.

"Victor!"

With a suppressed cry of joy the friends lay in each other's arms.

The new-comer was the first to release himself. He looked searchingly at his friend and said: "Anne, I am despised and a fugitive; they have put a price upon my head; may I stay?"

"Yes, stay; you are my friend."

"But —"

"Sit down beside me and put doubts aside. Tell me everything. Where do you think of going? I must know!"

Victor complied with his friend's invitation. He answered: "I have found refuge in an attic-chamber in the suburbs. Several hundred people live in the house; so one person is not much heeded. My friend, I have suddenly become poor and forsaken. I have saved nothing but my life."

"That is much," replied the senator earnestly; "and beside that, you have your freedom."



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Victor smiled sadly. His friend continued: "If you have become poor, remember that Christ renounced His glory for us; if you call yourself forsaken, then remember His abandonment at the cross, and, Victor, what you suffer, you suffer for the sake of the great Master."

"Do you think I am afraid?"

A smile passed over Anne du Bourg's face. "No, Victor Roger knows no fear, but to withstand open enemies is another thing than suffering martyrdom."

For awhile it was still in the room, then the banished man raised his eyes to his friend and said: "Anne, how different I had imagined our meeting to-day. I wanted to come to you to tell you that I had confessed my love to Constance and that she had promised to be mine — and now it is all over. I must give her back her promise — she must not be bound to the fate of an exile."

"Poor friend, the Lord is giving you and your faith a severe trial in the very beginning. The happiness of life is a strong snare to draw us to destruction; will you be able to let it go for the Lord's sake?"

Profound grief showed itself in the features of the listener, but he answered firmly: "I can and will do so."

The senator gave him his hand and he continued: "I have but one request to make of you. Go to Constance and tell her everything; give her back the promise she made me. Say that I thank her for the happiness of that one hour, — for her love — for —"



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The strong man's voice failed, he pressed his quivering lips firmly together and looked down at the floor.

"The Lord will repay you a hundredfold what you are now sacrificing for Him, but —"

"But you know that cannot sweeten the bitterness of this hour. His grace will be sufficient for me without this happiness, His grace which will eventually give me a place in the everlasting habitations. I have already repented in these short hours that I escaped from the executioner, but the love of life suddenly took forcible possession of me. Perhaps the Lord wishes to give me some work for His kingdom, work for the despised and persecuted, and if so I shall take it upon myself and complete it bravely."

The old courage beamed from the dark eyes of the speaker, and the senator, deeply moved, gave him his hand, saying, "God bless you!"

The clock on the mantel struck and Victor Roger rose hastily. He threw his arm around his friend and implored: "To-morrow morning, Anne, I beg of you, go to Constance! she will be very uneasy about me. Take her my last greeting; she must think of me as of one dead, which perhaps, I soon shall be."

A warm grasp of the hand, then the guest again wrapped his cloak about him and noiselessly left the room. The senator, however, sent up a fervent prayer that the Lord might protect the noble, courageous man.



Sad times had come to France. The light of the Gospel, which in Germany had again been placed upon a candlestick and was shining brightly, cast its beams also into blessed France. But it could not penetrate far, could not renew things. It was only strong enough to arouse antagonism, to inflame the anger of the Catholics into false zeal. Intolerance soon reached its height, and wherever it was even suspected that a person might harbor revolutionary opinions, his sentence was already pronounced. The times were wicked and accursed. Henry the Second was reigning in France. His wife was Catherine de Medici, who hated everything non-Catholic. Moreover the king gave ear to the evil counsels of his mistress, Diana de Poitiers.

But the greater the degeneracy of the times, the brighter shone the purity and earnestness of the reformed Church. The believers assembled here and there, holding their secret meetings for devotion; they were ready to seal their faith, their better knowledge, with death. Ah, the blood of martyrs cried out to heaven at that time, which was the middle of the sixteenth century, and there was no king who gave any heed to the question, "Where is thy brother?"

As senator, Anne du Bourg was well acquainted with all the circumstances, and the future seemed to offer little hope for his friend. It was incumbent on him now for the first time to give to the betrothed her



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lover's message. The next morning he set out to visit her. As an orphan she lived alone with an old relation in one of the principal streets of Paris. Her father had left her considerable wealth, but since even during his lifetime the apostasy from the old faith had been great, it was left with the condition that should his daughter incline to the new doctrine, she should have only a comparatively small sum and the rest should go to the Church.

The autumn sun shone into the richly furnished room. Constance du Roi was sitting by the window looking restlessly down upon the street. Victor had not been there yesterday; ah, how her heart longed for his love and the expression of it. How rich to her seemed a life spent at Victor's side, how securely could she take with him her onward journey!

Now someone was knocking at the door, and in response to her surprised "Come in," Anne du Bourg appeared on the threshold. She did not know him and went toward him with feelings of apprehension. He spoke his name, and she exclaimed in accents of fear: "Victor's friend? Has some misfortune befallen him? I pray you, tell me, is he dead?"

"He is alive," replied the senator earnestly, "but he is hunted."

Constance's large blue eyes looked beseechingly at the speaker as if she wished to hear more, but her



trembling lips could not utter a word. She struggled hard; a too sudden darkness had followed the bright outlook. Her hands were tightly clasped and her soul wrestled with God. In silence Anne du Bourg's eyes rested upon her. He had never seen her; he knew her only from his friend's account of her. Such purity of soul lay upon her beautiful pale countenance, his whole heart went out to her.

"Tell me everything," she implored at last.

The senator seated himself beside her, informing her what had happened. Finally he fulfilled his promise and gave her her lover's last message.

A quiet smile illuminated the girl's features, and she replied: "He gives me back my promise, but I shall not take it. I belong to him, just as I belong to the great, holy cause. Through Victor I have learned to know and love it, and nothing can henceforth make me desert it."

"But he is a despised, a lost man!"

"I will be despised with him; and he is only lost to the world,—he has been found and recognized by Christ."

Filled with veneration the senator gazed at Constance, but she continued: "Tell me where he is, and he shall hear from my lips the words which Ruth once spoke: 'Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from



following after thee. Whither thou goest, I will go. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.' "

Inspiration made the young face glow, and the senator turned aside; deep sorrow filled his heart; alas, was this maiden to take up the hard struggle of life and to face its persecution, anxiety and uncertainty? It seemed to him that as a friend he must stretch out his hand and prevent her.

Once more he tried to place clearly before her eyes what that was to which she aspired, and said earnestly: "Not only persecution and misery will be your fate, noble maiden, but poverty and want as well. I know the conditions of your deceased father's will."

But Constance's strong soul did not waver, and without hesitation she answered: "Not *my* fate but *ours*, M. du Bourg. You do not know the fidelity of a woman's love, else you would not seek to dissuade me."

The senator respectfully kissed the speaker's hand, then said: "I did it for my friend's sake; but now that I have fulfilled my duty, let me make a request of you: May I be your friend?"

Trustingly the maiden placed her small white hand in that of the noble man, and a faint smile lighted up her features as she replied: "I thank you, and I accept your friendship, but remember it may bring you into danger."



“Do you think I am less brave than Victor’s betrothed?”

Constance shook her head; and then the two fell earnestly to discussing the situation.

It was three days later and the night was falling. The wind swept through the streets and great drops of rain struck against the windows of the room in which Anne du Bourg stood leaning against the chimney-piece. Serious and thoughtful he looked at the flames. Ever and anon he started, listening intently at every noise from without.

“They are coming,” he whispered at last, going to the door.

When it had been opened, two men entered, Victor Roger and a clergyman of the reformed church. The senator greeted them with a warm grasp of the hand, then withdrew to seek Constance, who had been with him throughout the day.

“Victor is here, are you ready?”

The maiden followed him.

The senator was very pale; doubts had arisen in his soul as to whether he was doing right, and they had not as yet been set at rest. Would the tender creature at his side be able to brave to the end the storm of persecution? Did she know in fact what poverty and deprivation meant? Silently they walked through the corridor; as Anne du Bourg was about to grasp the door-knob, she



laid her hand lightly on his, and looking him full in the face, there in the dim light of the great wax taper, she said: "My friend, let us make each to the other in this hour this promise, that should either of us, you or we, travel the hard road to martyrdom, the other shall stand by and strengthen him."

"Yes, I promise you!"

She wanted to say more, but with swift decision the senator had opened the door and the strong arms of the waiting lover clasped his betrothed.

"Victor!"

A short time after, the clergyman went away, and a few hours later the newly married pair left the hospitable roof and hastened to their home,—alas, that it was only a poor little room in the suburb!

The senator, however, paced restlessly back and forth in his large room; he thought he could still feel the pressure of the little hand upon his own, and the words again sounded in his ears: "Should one of us, you or we, ever have to travel the hard road to martyrdom, the other shall stand by to strengthen him."

The times became more and more serious. The watchfulness of the adherents of the old church was redoubled; daily it was reported that this one and that one had been seized, another, still another burned at the stake. With anxious suspense Anne du Bourg examined the records, but the names of Victor and Constance were not



there. On the other hand, he became more and more conscious that he himself was the object of secret and eager observation. He managed several times for the strengthening of his faith to attend the secret meetings of the reformed Christians. He studied the Holy Scriptures more and more zealously, and it grew clearer and clearer to him that the new doctrine alone could give him peace. He had seen Victor and Constance only once at one of these meetings; in the midst of all their privations they were happy.

“Poor in earthly goods but rich in God,” the young wife had said with beaming face.

Things could not go on as they were; something must be done, and impelled by this feeling, there gathered in Paris in the spring of the following year, 1559, a number of men who came from all parts of France as representatives of the Protestant believers, to hold a Synod and make the first public declaration of their faith.

Anne du Bourg rejoiced over this move, but what would the enemy do? The question was not long to remain unanswered. The Parliament of Paris met, and took counsel as to how the Lutheran heresy might best be extirpated.

It was early on a sunny day in May. The senator, Anne du Bourg, stood at a window and looked out upon the street; his countenance was as grave as if he had forever forgotten how to smile. Presently his old servant



entered, and advancing quickly toward him, the senator whispered: "Henry, how is it in the suburbs?"

"All is well, master; they are all filled with courage for the faith, and would have me tell you that their watchword is, 'Lord, whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.'"

Anne du Bourg nodded contentedly, then he asked again, apparently with painful constraint: "Are they suffering need?"

"No, master; your kindness does not let them want."

"What I send them cannot suffice."

"But they know how to be poor, and they esteem it an honor."

"They are heroes, Henry!"

"You, too, will be a hero, master, if it is required; I know you!"

"Thank you, my friend; yes, I hope so. The times are more serious than ever, and something decisive will soon be done. Go, lay out my robes. I must shortly go to the senate."

When Anne du Bourg entered there a little later, several senators pressed about him and the question at issue was eagerly discussed. They were not favorable to the new doctrine, but neither did they reject it. The senate-chamber filled up more and more, and the session began. There was a wide difference of opinion among the senators; but at last the greater number agreed



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to express themselves for tolerance. Thereupon the adherents of the old religion became angry; they would go to the king, who himself should be present at the sitting of parliament and his voice give the decision.

Greatly dejected, the little company of the faithful went home, and those who were undecided looked grave also.

Just at this time, King Henry the Second, had neither time nor desire to respond to the demand made upon him. The weddings of his daughter Elizabeth, and his sister, Margaret, were at hand, and the hall of parliament was being prepared for these festivities; nevertheless he had to consent, and ordered that the session should be held in the Augustinian monastery.

It was on the evening of the 9th of July. Midnight was approaching; but Anne du Bourg was still standing at the window. Deep sorrow lay on his features, because he knew that the great cause was about to be defeated. He did not think of himself, he was in God's care, but he remembered his friends, and especially Victor. He summoned his faithful Henry, and giving him his hand said: "My friend, I am seeing you perhaps for the last time. To-morrow will be an important day, and the Lord will permit me to know the truth. If I should not return, take Victor my love and this casket; it will keep him from need."

The old servant broke into tears.



"Praise God with me," continued the senator, "that He grants me the light of His Word; that is surely worth a short time of suffering."

He motioned to Henry to withdraw; the latter, painfully moved, complied. Anne du Bourg remained in prayer for many hours. Not until the stars grew pale did he lie down on his bed for a brief rest.

The 10th of June dawned, and the senators assembled in the refectory of the monastery. A feeling of anxious expression settled over the meeting. Now the king entered, accompanied by the Guises, the fanatical representatives of the papal party.

Henry the Second commanded the senators to express their opinions fully. A deathly stillness ensued in the spacious room. Alas, would not a single person have courage to take up the sacred cause of the new doctrine?

The faces of the enemy expressed triumph and malicious joy, but they exulted too soon, for now Anne du Bourg arose. After thanking the king for having come to hear the great cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, which princes above all other men had to defend, he continued: "Frightful sacrilege against God, perjury, and adultery are not only permitted, but people are incited to them by disgraceful licentiousness, while those are condemned who wish to uncover the outrages of Rome; and truly it is not a light thing to condemn those who in the midst of the flames confess the name of Jesus Christ."



Painful silence followed these words. The king rose and left the room accompanied by several of the cardinals. What might he be thinking of? Did he incline toward the senator and his candid words? Ah, not long were they to be in doubt. As Anne du Bourg was leaving the meeting, he was seized by Count Montgomery. The king had given orders to throw him into the Bastile.\* Fear took possession of the assembly; it was the first time that men had laid hands upon the person of a senator. But none tried to assist the brave man; the best of them had only a compassionate shrug of the shoulders for him, and even this but in secret. With head erect Anne du Bourg followed the count; he knew what was before him. Nevertheless he did not repent having done honor to the truth; he had confessed the Lord, who would likewise help him.

Evil times began for the senator. From the very first he missed every ray of hope from his heart that freedom would be restored to him. He knew well that his friends would leave no means untried for his deliverance, and that the congregation of believers would be persistent in prayer for him. But he knew as well that the king had sworn with his own eyes to see him, the heretic, burned at the stake.

He was treated cruelly and roughly in prison. They often had him in an iron cage. But his divine courage

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\* State Prison in Paris.



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was not weakened. In the midst of misery and torture he played on his lyre, which they permitted him to have, and sang the Psalms of David, over whose head also the waters of affliction had rolled. He gave comfort and encouragement to others thereby, and his own soul was lifted in tranquility to God.

It was almost four weeks after that significant session of the senate. Paris was in a revel of rejoicing and pleasure. The wedding festivities of the royal ladies lasted many days, all the pomp and luxury known at that time being lavished on them.

In the neighborhood of the Bastile there was a street called St. Anthony, where they held a tournament. The king had distinguished himself by his skill upon the field, and devoted himself more and more passionately to the sport. On a certain day, although evening was already approaching, he could not tear himself away from the battle-ground, and at last handed Count Montgomery his lance to have still one more turn with him. In the Count's rush upon him, however, his lance broke and a splinter deeply penetrated the king's eye. The grievously wounded monarch was taken into a nearby house, which had been decorated for the festivities, and there, dying, the king was laid upon a bed of state, at the head of which hung a canopy representing the conversion of Paul, with these words : "Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?"



On the tenth of July, amidst great suffering, he forever closed his eyes,—those eyes which had wanted to see the witness of the truth burned at the stake.

The friends of Anne du Bourg took hope again. They turned to the queen with a petition, the prisoner permitting no other course. As a special favor he was allowed to see some of his friends at appointed times, and he accepted this privilege with gratitude. One of the first to be admitted was Victor, who in tears clasped his imprisoned friend in his arms. The latter, too, was greatly moved; but a divine peace rested on his pale features and only words of exultation came from his lips.

“Did Constance send me no message?” asked Anne du Bourg after a little while.

“Yes, she said to me, ‘Tell my friend, I have in my heart only one prayer for him, that he may endure unto the end.’”

A smile illumined the features of the senator, and he replied: “I thank her, it is the only thing that I still need.”

The friends talked together a long time, and at last Victor said: “I must tell you, Anne, that we are filled with new hope for you; Count Otto, who considers you a distinguished jurist, has sent representatives to secure you, if possible, for Heidelberg.”

“That will only hasten my doom,” answered Anne du Bourg gravely; my enemies will try me before the men arrive, or I do not know the Cardinal of Guise.”



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In dismay Victor looked at his friend. Was there, alas, no way to save this noble, great-hearted man? They soon parted, comforted by the great Friend of souls who sanctifies all earthly friendships.

The senator had not been mistaken. His doom was hastened forward. The trial took place in the Bastille. He was asked concerning his faith; he testified with divine courage and without reservation, neither did he conceal that he had taken the Holy Communion in both forms because he had considered it as right and commanded. The court, with the Bishop of Paris at its head, condemned him as a heretic.

Wholly undaunted he received the sentence, and only one thing caused him pain, that the execution was to be put off until December. But even to this his soul bowed in resignation as to the will of God, and he employed the time in writing out his confession of faith for the benefit of his friends of the congregation, a member of which he counted himself.

Week after week passed, and the believers were not able to understand why the Lord should let His faithful servant wait so long unless He had some special purpose in the delay. They thought perhaps that there might still be a way to save their noble friend's life.

Anne du Bourg's strength failed in the foul air of the prison, and his soul, too, often grew weary, although always resting on the Lord. One day, when he was par-



ticularly weak, some acquaintances came to him and urged him to write out a milder confession, which would immediately set him free. After much persuasion they had their wish, but as soon as they had gone he repented, and would gladly have given his life to have been able to undo the deed.

What he had done was soon known in the congregation, and his real friends came and besought him to stand by his first glorious confession.

One day two men entered his cell. With joy he recognized Victor, and as he looked with surprise at his companion the latter threw off her head-covering, and there escaped from the amazed prisoner's lips the one word, "Constance!"

"I am keeping my promise," said she with a firm voice, although her lips were quivering with inward emotion. "My friend, return to your first confession! Ah, did we become indolent in prayer, that you became weak?"

The eyes of the senator rested firmly on the speaker. When she ceased speaking, he replied, a swift flush suffusing his pale cheeks: "I repented long ago that I yielded; here is another, a good confession for the Church; my friends, pay no heed to the first. Announce to them that I am steadfast and that God will forgive me for having wavered."



"God bless you for it!" exclaimed Constance with joy, "you will be a shining light for many."

"I will seek to make good the failure, of which in a moment of weakness I was guilty."

The young wife gave him both her hands, which he held in his own for a long time. Ah, what joy he felt at this token of warm and loving friendship. Upon taking leave, Victor gave him a letter from the reformed preacher Marlosat, who was at the head of the congregation of Paris, saying to him with gladness: "It is no longer necessary for you to read it, you have done already what he besought you, namely, to stand by your first confession. Nevertheless read the words of the faithful man. "

On the occasion of another short visit of consolation from his beloved friends which was granted to the prisoner, in parting, the latter said: "Victor, flee as soon as you find a favorable opportunity."

"Not yet, dear friend."

"Do not wait for my death, which the Lord delays."

"We shall wait," interrupted Constance.

"And then?"

"Then, when you are in your heavenly home, we shall hasten from this place of sadness and horror."

She said this so calmly and decidedly, that there was no gainsaying her.



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"Thank you," whispered the prisoner, lightly touching her white forehead with his lips.

Then he embraced his friend, it was a last parting for this life. When the heavy door closed behind them, the senator continued for a long time walking back and forth, his face shining with ecstasy and peace. The Lord had given him again the old heroic courage, and he rejoiced that every hour was bringing the end nearer.

On the twenty-first day of December he solemnly and joyfully declared again before the judges that he would live and die in his faith. Thereupon the sentence was read to him, that he should be burned. Then the old man knelt down and thanked God that He deemed him worthy of so great an honor, to die for the vindication of the eternal truth, and prayed also to God to forgive his judges. To these also at last he spoke earnestly of the true salvation and the true path to blessedness. Many were deeply moved and would gladly have set him free; but they were bound, and their souls knew nothing of the freedom of the children of God.

The condemned man was taken in a cart to the place of execution, guarded by four hundred soldiers, since there was a fear of an uprising of the people. Having come thither he took off his outer garments as quietly as if he were going to bed. Then he turned to the people and announced in a loud voice that he was suffering for the sake of the Gospel. In a moment the executioners



threw a rope about his neck, for it had been granted him as a special grace that he should be strangled before he was burned. They still heard him pray: "My God, do not forsake me that I may not forsake Thee!" His eyes fell upon a man in the multitude who was holding his clasped hands high, and upon a young, deathly pale woman whose glorified face was turned heavenward,—they were Victor and Constance. A last smile passed over the countenance of the dying man, then the everlasting habitations were opened to him. He saw what he had believed and steadfastly confessed.

That very day two poorly-clad peddlers walked slowly out of Paris toward the next village. There a man with horses was waiting for them, who, when he saw them said softly: "God be praised!" It was the faithful servant Henry, who wanted to help Victor Roger and his wife in their flight.

The newcomers greeted him sadly, and he looked at them with questioning eyes.

"Is my master dead?"

Victor nodded, unable to speak for anguish, but Constance said: "He died confessing the faith, Henry; he was a great man in God's kingdom, and his death will become for many the entrance into eternal life."

Silently the old servant wiped away his tears. The other two mounted their horses, once more giving the faithful servant their hands in parting, then slowly rode



away in the evening twilight toward a distant and free country. When the stars in all their wondrous beauty appeared overhead, Victor stopped his horse, looked up at the shining firmament and sighed.

“My friend!”

Then he turned to his beloved wife, whose beaming eyes met his as she whispered:

“He is in His Father’s house.”







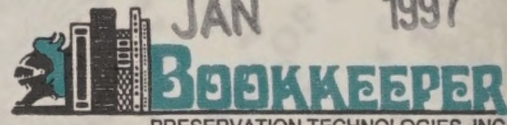




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